50 ARTICLES FROM 50 ISSUES OF...

LOCO MAG

featuring work from...

Jeff Bethea
Kelly Cox
Victoria Engle
Danielle Kocher
Sammy Nickalls
Rachel Bellwoar
Lauren Pickens
Alex Mazzo
Shana Hartzel
Brittany Tedesco
Mike Fitzpatrick
Sierra (Altland) McCann
Bri Wink
Kevin McCann
Frances Dumlao
Alixe Wiley
Tiana Grosch
Helen Armstrong
Ashley Paskill
Caitlin McLaughlin
Sarah Adeniran
Lana Valente
Kirby Sibiski
Austin Zotomayor
Julia Bozeman
Jessica Anders
Sophie Carroll
Leah Mangold
Paulie Ippolito
Esley Buss
Eric McInnis
Kristen Stedman
Allora Lee
Allie Nye
Savannah Munholland
Kenzie Myer
Ben Dunst
Kate Jock
Rosa Talley
Belle Manetta
Julie Snider

Letter from the Editor

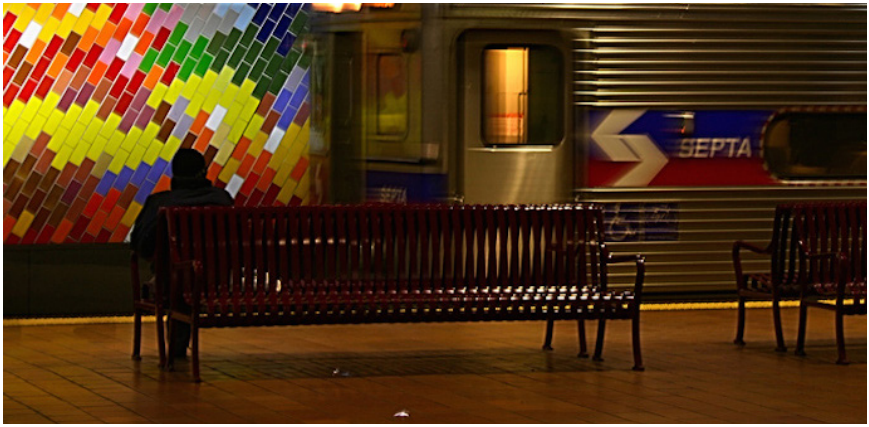
50 editions. It's a big deal for a small, student-run magazine. So many people have worked on Loco Mag over the years, making it what it is today. It only felt right to find a way to commemorate all the past Editors in Chiefs and contributors. Without them, I would not have had the oppurtunity to be a part of Loco Mag.

This print magazine is a year in the making. By the time this print magazine in published, Loco Mag will have just published it's 57th issue. I started this a year ago, but then the COVID-19 pandemic hit, school closed, and things got chaotic. Since then, I started my senior year and became one of two Editors in Chief of Loco Mag for the 2020-2021 school year. I knew that this project still deserved to be completed.

For the past three years, Loco Mag has been one of my favorite parts of college. Seperate from the stress of work and classes, Loco Mag gave me the oppurtunity to write things that I want to. I met other students that inspired me and taught me other skills I wouldn't have otherwise learned (I wouldn't know how to even make this project if not for the Editor in Chief my first year on staff). Loco Mag was like an escape from the pressures of school. It was a place to be creative and have fun and see our work actually get published to create something tangible. I'd like to believe that a lot of other Loco Mag staff members also felt this way towards the magazine through the years. It's the past staff and EIC's that kept the magazine going so that students like me would get to experience it. So, this is my way to say thank you. I hope in a couple years I hear about the 100th issue.

- Savannah

P.S, I also want to thank and credit Julie Snider and Allie Nye, who helped format some of these articles when the project was started in 2020.



Travel Journal: Septa Transportation

Issue #1 Philly
By: Jeff

Saturday

February, 18, 2012

9:35 AM

It has been decided! My girlfriend, Christa, and I begin walking to the Glenside train station with all our equipment (my video equipment and her photography equipment) after deciding to ride every form of SEPTA transportation. The train to Market East Station is scheduled at 9:59AM and we are both strutting down the street with excitement mixed with a hunger for adventure. We only have $15 for the both of us and we are hoping maybe we can settle for a One Day Convenience Pass since it is $4 dollars cheaper than the $11 Independence Pass.

10:05 AM

We are now on the train. Seconds after boarding it, I realized that we are on a Quiet Ride car. The thing is, it is really not all that qui-

et right now which means there's a decent amount of people that do not mind neglecting the rules of the Quiet Ride during this time of this day. One of the conductors is a man with long red hair and a slight British accent or something similar to one. He came around and we were informed that Convenience Passes cannot be purchased onboard trains because they do not work for SEPTA transportation by train. So unfortunately since we did not have the required $22 to buy two Independence Passes, we bought two tickets for one way only which amounted to $12 for the both of us.

This was a little bumming considering that in order to complete our mission there are still two Independence Passes to be bought! Christa is currently informing and convincing her parents that she needs more money for the completion of this trip. Hope that goes over well… or this will be the shortest journey and quickest waste of money I've experienced in a long time.

10:25 AM

We have reached Market East Station and the enthusiasm has slightly dwindled as we have been reminded of our "broke college student" statuses. To kill the time as we plan our next move and await deposits of extra money, I count my small case of quarters, dimes, and nickels and realize that it is a total of $8.10. That means we could have so painstakingly paid the amount of $22 with a third of payment being in coins. Go figure.

Anyway, it's time to decide what is to be the next form of transportation if we're going to continue this trip.

12:20 PM

So extra money came through for us and after much walking, looking, and question-asking, we have finally arrived at Drexel University campus by way of the SEPTA trolley. We were directed to catch one from 13th Street to 33rd Street and though the ride was fairly smooth and short, I can say

that the trolley reminds me of some weird hybrid: It made frequent stops like a bus but traveled underground for most of the trip like a subway train. This is, of course, not what came to mind since I was used to associating the word “trolley” with a decorative transport that always offers tours. In all curiosity, I actually do not know why one would prefer a trolley unless they are traveling above ground at some point (which we did not). Anyway, we are going to explore a little and then head to University of Pennsylvania’s campus for a small sample of University City.

1:20 PM

As you can probably see from the time that I wrote this, it took us a while to reach UPenn’s campus due to our slow tourist-paced walking. We had stopped to order chicken over rice from a Halal food stand just a couple of blocks or so from our destination. I did not think this was a good idea at all considering Christa had taken me to a Halal food stand for my first time during my first trip to New York EVER this past Thanksgiving break and the rice had this unusual and unpleasing minty flavor. But once again, my stomach one-sidedly won the battle against the memory and I decided to give it a second shot. We both are now stuffing our faces and scoping out potentials for filming/photographing.

3:13 PM

Okay once again this time log, compared to the previous, should be a clear indication of how much I was all over the place without writing to let you guys in on the action. I was hesitant to admit it at first, but I had ADD since arriving at UPenn’s campus. I didn’t know where to go, what to see, what or who to film. All in all, we did a great bit of walking and sight-seeing around the campus but it’ll take more time and focus to give sufficient detail on the beauty of the campus. Perhaps another day… It is getting colder and windier and I’m racing against sunset to allow for

the best shots possible. We are now taking a trolley back to 13th and Market Street. It is just as smooth as the last ride except that I have become more aware of the loud squeak and squeal noises caused by what sounds like grinding metal. Due to our route, we once again stay mostly within the tunnel rather than on the open street. Kind of takes away from the potential experience of the trolley but I'll save that for another day as well.

3:43 PM

Almost there…there are still a couple more transportations left. Still hungering for adventure, we are now waiting at Market East Station for a SEPTA subway to take us to South Street and sight-see a little more before heading home. Nothing too unexpected or out of the ordinary is really happening in the realms of public transportation. Anyway, I apologize ahead of time because I may once again not be competent in writing journal entries …

6:33 PM

Well? What did I tell you? Almost three hours later! From the inside, the subway was not much different from the train as you probably can imagine except for the underground travel. We are a little bit behind our planned schedule due to our South Street Exploration detour that included a curious trip to Condom Kingdom (don't ask) and we are now riding the train back to Glenside train station. The particular car we are in this time is not designated as a "Quiet Car" so the people are even more talkative and noisy than this morning. The conductor punched a hole in our passes as the last ride but there's just one more form of SEPTA transportation left…I hope the bus doesn't take forever to pick us up when we get back.

7:05 PM

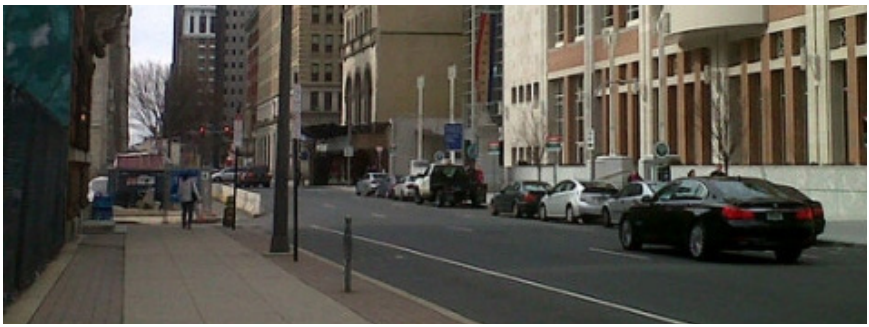
We had watched a bus taking off as soon as we got off the train and were sitting on the bench with obvious disappointment to await the next one. Surprisingly, with-

in about three minutes the next bus came. With a short explanation to the driver that the conductor on the train hole-punched our passes misunderstanding that that was our last ride when it indeed was not, we were on our way. It was now dark so the ride seemed accordingly lit. It was short, to the point, and we were back to campus before we knew it. I'm exhausted right now and already I hope to be able to do this again sometime one day soon but with more time allotted. If you are ever interested, I highly recommend doing it. It may just be me, but I felt like I was a VIP when using the Independence pass. That's just more incentive for you, but don't carry a bunch of video/photography equipment around with you or it may not be as enjoyable as I'm making it seem and you'll hate that you even took time to read this article. Until next time!

Photo Credit: Stephen Janofsky. Photo used under Creative Commons license.

“You Wear Them Legs, Girl”: A Sociological Night on the Town

Issue #2 Spring
By: Kelly Cox



French philosopher and Father of Sociology, Auguste Comte, wrote in his 1830 essay entitled Course of Positive Philosophy that “Human progress consists essentially in the evolution of the moral and intellectual qualities proper to man. Various circumstances facilitate and retard this progress.”

As far as I know, Auguste never said anything about Philadelphia during Spring Break. And yet that didn’t stop me from walking out of Market Street Station late last Saturday, glancing over the eclectic assortment of characters that make up city nightlife, and flashing back to his words on the supreme importance of human progress. I let my mind wander to how Auguste would feel, dressed up in his best suit jacket and looking out over the teeming masses.

I imagined he would have rolled his eyes and thrown up his hands in the middle of Market and 16th street, causing a few early drunks to stumble out of the way.

"Moral and intellectual qualities? Where's the progress? Where is that person's pants?!" He would say. Except, you know, in French.

Or maybe Comte would have thrown on some tight jeans and an ironic t-shirt, grabbed his flask, and joined in on the merriment. We'll never know.

As it happened, Comte was not there, so I smothered the 214 year old philosopher's voice in my head and refocused on the present. Three of my closest friends were visiting, and I'd promised them a night out on the town. Headed towards Old City, we marched by the beautifully lit Independence Mall, admiring the historical significance while simultaneously getting cat calls from across the street. All of the attention was focused on my friend K, we realized early on. K, unlike the rest of us, had bravely and/or foolishly decided to expose herself to the elements in a very short and very tight dress and heels combination. Spring fever outfit. Various circumstances. Walking down Chestnut Street, we neared Penn's Landing and the sounds of impending bars. "You wear them legs, girl!" a tall woman shouted at my friend K as we walked by. The women's comment was undoubtedly the most empowering we heard all night, and it soon became our Spring Break feminist mantra, meant to give us confidence in any situation. Come on, you can go to the bathroom by yourself, you wear them legs. You don't need anyone to buy you a drink, girl, you just wear your own legs.

Eventually we found ourselves in a town center of sorts, surrounded by the sight of enticing neon signs, the sounds emerging from the pubs of which there were too many to choose, and the scents wafting out of

greasy garlicky pizza joints. Old Citywas crawling with 20-somethings engaging in the fine art of bar hopping. Warm weather brings out the restlessness in people, and being in crowds sometimes makes me nervous. Like what if all the too-cool hipsters and party girls became zombies and chased us through the charming Old City cobblestone pathways? Clearly, it's a fantasy which begs for some psychoanalysis. As a result of my unease, I turned to theory.

Standing on North Second and looking out over the crowded streets, I considered the present scene and allowed myself to muse. "When did this become the norm? Who are these people? Look at those boys over there. They look kind of emotional. Maybe they're thinking about the impermanence of youth."

"Or maybe they're just really drunk," my friend L replied.

A car passed, narrowly avoiding the flood of human traffic, and a tall dreadlocked man stuck his head out of the window.

"Hey red jacket—sexy legs!"

"You're probably right" I sighed, glancing back at L. Qualitative research at a brief rest.

We stepped off the curb with an upscale Irish pub called The Plough and the Stars as our destination, but we were intercepted when a scraggly looking man approached us. What was at first some incomprehensible muttering, eventually turned into an offer to "rap for each of you pretty girls." The cycle of poverty and the prevalence of street performance, I thought forlornly to myself. What we need is education and engagement, structural redevelopment in order to decrease the income gap that's so prevalent in urban society.

After the man threw down some truly impressive rhymes, considering the fact that the whole show was improvisational, he began to lament on the state of the

economy. Talk about some backwards moral and intellectual evolution. I hear ya' man, I wanted to say but didn't for fear that it would only prolong the interaction. Really, he wasn't a case study that I was particularly interested in delving into. Eventually he bid us goodnight, no richer but for our praise.

I can only assume that our attempts at altruism (as coined by Comte), were enough. Although if his quick shift in attention to the girls behind us was any indication, he was still in fact looking for more.

Rap adventure behind us, we made it to our Irish pub. Eventually however, the group dynamics shifted, and we left the safety of dark lighting, candles, and an unspoken agreement to act like adults and made our way to a place called Mad River, which is probably as close as I'll be coming from now on to a frat party. Beer was being served in plastic cups. The floor was kind of sticky. A DJ was playing Rihanna and a few brave and blessedly drunk souls had taken on the awkward task of being the first to turn the area into a dance floor. 'Cause I may be bad but I'm perfectly good at it.' Deep.

I noticed a few employees standing on chairs a few feet off the ground, watching the action from above. Clearly not enacting anthropological fieldwork, I assumed they were there to make sure nothing got out of hand, but I felt a stab of jealousy anyway. I bet the bird's eye view of this scene was way more interesting and humorous then the view I had, which was at that moment a girl's back as she attempted to shimmy without falling over.

We endured some more catcalls and I wondered about the misogynistic undertones apparent in rap and R&B music. Someone spilled beer on my shoes. We photo bombed some pictures, and I can only hope that all those people who have our faces peeking out from their photographs went through the shots the next day and got a real of

sense of enjoyment, while perhaps giving some serious thought to our culture's dissolving boundaries between public and private.

As is common in such situations, the amount of fun I was having had a direct correlation with how much cheap beer I drank and the growing level of drunken camaraderie that was inspired. Eventually the DJ put on "Don't Stop Believin'" and sociological concerns forgotten, we all came together, lifted our beers, and screamed Journey as if our very lives depended on it. We were all wearing our legs, girl. In that sweaty moment at Mad River, I was ready to believe that maybe there was some kind of human progress in the pure joy that was radiating from that small room. I'm almost positive that Comte would agree with me.

Still, I couldn't help but glance up every now and then and think that the bouncer towering over all of us had the best view; presiding over the sweaty drunken interactions, studying the peculiar mating behavior of over-confident 21 year olds, observing love and the strange framework of action that we call life.

Or maybe he was just looking down everyone's shirt.

Sailing Away From the Safe Harbor

Issue #3 Turning Over a New Leaf
By: Victoria

"Gypsy blood! That's what's in you, Hun!" My grandmother teased when I told her that, once again, I was off on an adventure. This time my destination was the city of Brisbane in Queensland, Australia. I can never stay in one place for too long. I blame it on the fact that I come from a family of nomads. My cousins are spread out across continents; my parents have lived in eight states. It is no wonder why, after spending two years in Glenside, I began to feel that familiar feeling of itchy feet. I had a longing to see things that I have never seen before and go places that I had never been.

Luckily, Arcadia's study abroad program offered me a window which I practically hurled myself through. For months I prepared myself for life in Australia. I filled out documents left and right. I did hours of research. I even took a seminar on Australian film and literature hoping that I would sound like a cultured "Aussie." Some called me obsessed and crazy. I preferred to think of myself as being organized. What I

learned upon my arrival here was that nothing can actually prepare you for living alone in a different country. On top of that, I was living in the heart of Brisbane- the third largest city in Australia. Coming from a small island (ironically called “The Big Island”) in Hawaii, city living was not exactly my forte. Thankfully, this country has welcomed me with open arms and I have been able to stand on my own two feet.

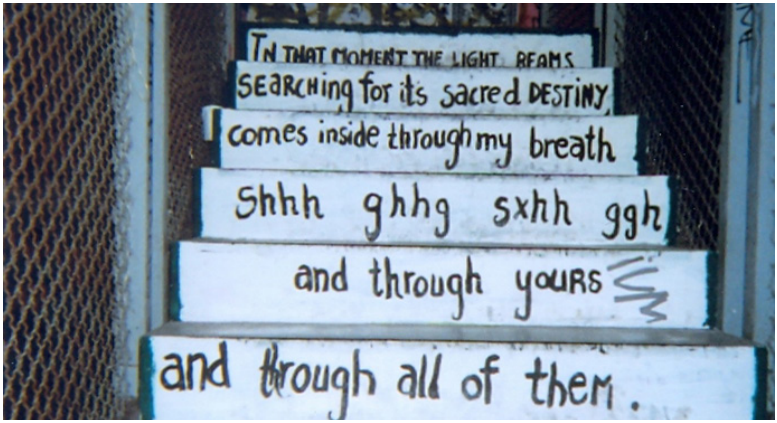
I have learned many tips and tricks while living in Australia. First, get a bus pass. Second, wear plenty of sunscreen. Finally, and this is the most important, say “yes” to everything. Back in “the States” I am a professional excuse maker. Most nights I prefer to stay in drinking tea and pinning things on Pinterest for the wedding not in my foreseeable future, the dinner parties I will never throw, and the children that I do not yet have. When invited to do things my initial reaction is to throw out excuses, such as: I have work to do, I’m sick cough cough, I need to help my roommate’s friend’s grandmother move her baby grand piano. Did I really have work to do? Yes, but let’s be honest, I wasn’t going to do it. Was I sick? I haven’t been sick in months. Did I really need to help move a baby grand piano? No. No, I most definitely did not. Being in Australia has rid me of my bad habit of what I like to call “pre-mature old lady-ness.” By saying yes to things I would normally have an excuse for, I have been able to create some truly unforgettable moments. I have had the privilege of working backstage at fashion shows, seeing amazing bands (for free!), and discovering that the best place to get a cheap $5 lunch in the city was a literal underground bar only accessible by walking down a dead-end alley and cutting through a dingy bakery. That last one was a huge gamble, but one I am glad that I took!

The most useful thing I’ve learned while studying abroad is that I could not afford to be afraid. I couldn’t be afraid to go places alone. I couldn’t be afraid of the public transportation system (this

fear took me weeks to overcome). I especially couldn't be afraid to explore and try new things. Once I made these realizations, I have been able to really enjoy everything that life abroad has to offer.

Australia has done much more than just quench my thirst to travel. This country has taught me more about myself than any other place I have been. It has truly become my home away from home. With the motivation from my "gypsy" family and the support of my new Australian friends, I have grown and changed- for the better. I have slowly gained a new outlook on life and I can't wait to see where it takes me.

Photo Credit: Syauqee Mohamad. Photo used under Creative Commons license


IN THAT MOMENT THE LIGHT BEAMS
SEARCHING for its sacred DESTINY
comes inside through my breath
Shhh ghhg sxhh ggh
and through yours
and through all of them.

The End of Kunsthaus Tacheles

Issue #4 Apocalypse
By:Danielle

Earlier this year, the city of Berlin, Germany experienced the end of a world within itself: Kunsthaus Tacheles.

Tacheles was an art house in the Mitte district of Berlin, right in the center of the city (literally, Mitte means “middle”). Housed right on Oranienberger Strasse, a prime place for prostitutes to ahem practice, the art house was home to dozens of artists who worked, lived, and sold their pieces within the walls of the building. It even featured a cinema, bar, dance club, and restaurant.

More than just an art house, Tacheles was a staple in Berlin’s culture. After the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, artists started squatting in the massive building, which used to be a key Nazi office during World War II. Throughout the 90’s and 2000’s, the artists built up a reputation for their home as a mecca of the arts. Jewelry, printmaking, and sculpture all found their place in Tacheles.

From the time you walked in, you were surrounded by this old-Berlin vibe. It was reminiscent of the early 90s, where eccentricity and experimentalism dominated- it was dark, it was deep, it was the new Berlin. Tacheles was one of the few places in today's world where you could actually see goods being made in front of you and talk to the artists (granted, most of them didn't speak fluid English, but that's beside the point.)

The walls were covered with graffiti, and every room offered something new. In one space, an artist set up shop with screen-printed shirts, flags, backpacks…basically anything that could be printed on. In the next room over, another artist fashioned fishbowls and dioramas out of junked televisions. Go up a few flights of stairs and you'd find jewelry crafted out of bone and leather.

The backyard featured metal sculptures, some half-finished, and industrial music playing, adding to the "artists at work" aura. And every stairwell, every inch of every wall, was absolutely COVERED with art. Not art in the museum sense, but art in the human sense. Tacheles was truly owned by the people. Here, you were more immersed in the art than you would be at any old museum.

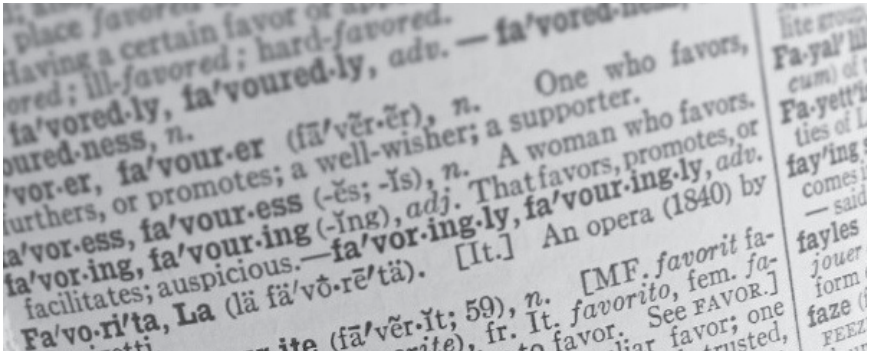
Alas, all good things must come to an end…at least that's what "they" tell us. Tacheles saw its apocalypse on September 4th, despite artists' efforts to save it. HSH Nordbank, legal owners of the building, ordered an evacuation of the site as they are planning to sell it to a developer. The group of 70+

artists went peacefully, but not without expressing emotion: two were playing funeral music, clad in black from head to toe.

While we probably won't see the end of planet Earth in 2012, we saw the end of a smaller world: that of Kunsthaus Tacheles.

Photo Credit: Danielle Kocher, Loco Mag writer. For more of Danielle's photos, visit our Flickr page.

In that moment the light beams
searching for its sacred destiny
comes inside through my breath
Shhh ghhg sxhh ggh
and through yours
and through all of them.
SURPRISED ants HERE
Staring carefully



The Real Meaning of the Word Favorite

Issue #5 Favorite
By: Sammy

Favorite is one of those words. You know, like “love” and “hate,” one of those words that people use all the time but don’t really question the meaning of. We use these words incessantly without even thinking about it—“Thanks, you’re my favorite!” “This is my favorite movie ever.” “This restaurant is my new favorite.” Nowadays, people throw around the word “favorite” not thinking about the long term. Just because you claimed that Nickelback was your favorite band in middle school does not mean you still feel the same way now. (At least, I hope not.)

So what does “favorite” mean? Sure, you could Google it and quote The Free Dictionary’s definition: “a. One that is trusted, indulged, or preferred above all others.” Cool, yeah, that makes sense. That’s what everyone knows favorite means.

But just like love and hate, favorite may have a definition in the dictionary, but not many adhere to it. We throw around the word “favorite” about anything and every-

thing. Just because I told a waitress at Isaac's last week that she's my favorite for giving me a little bit of extra ice cream does not mean that I trust, indulge, or prefer her above all others. Hell, I don't even know her, and yet I had essentially told her that she is above all others in my mind—my family, my closest friends, my boyfriend—just for giving me a little bit of extra vanilla ice cream. Am I a sell-out or what? (Though admittedly, that ice cream was bangin'.)

So, you may ask, what do we mean when we say that this is our "favorite" issue? Are we talking about ice-cream-waitress equivalent here, or are we talking about what is the ultimate best of everything? The answer is neither, really.

I myself have a "favorite list" of songs on my iPod consisting of 259 songs from various bands. It's really a giant melting pot of music (actually, I'm totally renaming the playlist that, as of now), consisting of all sorts of genres and types—fast, slow, soulful, fun. Some of it makes me cry occasionally, while some makes me drum along on the steering wheel as I drive. That playlist has everything: rock, folk, alternative, electronic, and even a tiny bit of country. I've had numerous people tell me that I can't have 259 favorite songs. But no matter what anyone says, and though these songs are eclectic and have seemingly nothing to do with each other, they all do have one thing in common: they are my favorites. I define them as such for the simple reason that they touch or move me in some way (whether that means move literally or figuratively). And as I go through life and discovering new music, I'm always adding more.

Perhaps The Free Dictionary's definition is not exactly what we are talking about here. Perhaps we can try the classic Merriam-Webster Dictionary, which defines "favorite" in two ways that seem just about right: "1. granted special treatment or attention," "2. singled out from a number or group as more to

one's liking." We are choosing these aspects of our lives to define as "favorites" because we grant them special treatment and have singled them out from a group. Why? Because they move us in some way. Maybe they bring us back to a happy time in our lives. Or perhaps they're things we find beautiful. Maybe they're the highlights of our days. Or maybe, just maybe, they're just really damn good, and we want to show them to you, our dedicated readers, because we hope that you'll love them as much as we do.

So yes, I can tell that waitress that she was my favorite, because in that moment, she was definitely one of them. I think back on that moment and remember that kind waitress who gave me a little extra ice cream, simply because she brightened my day. Perhaps "favorite" doesn't have to be such a definitive, black and white term. Perhaps favorite can just mean this: something that we have singled out because it moved us in such a strong way.

This issue will be The Melting Pot of all our favorite things. And this issue will be our favorite issue yet, because we get to gush about everything we love. They might not be "trusted above all others" because that's not what favorite means to us. Favorite means something that is a piece of ourselves, and we want to share those pieces with you. This issue will be eclectic, crazy, and all over the place, but all of these articles will meet at one wonderful focal point: they all moved us in some way, and they all are things we trust, indulge, or prefer above all others. They all made us feel more human than we've ever felt before. And that's our favorite thing of all.

A Dreaded Sunny Day, So I Meet You At Highgate

Issue #6 British Invasion
By: Danielle

Nestled to the north of London, Highgate Cemetery is the final resting place of some of the world's most prominent historical figures. Founder of socialism Karl Marx, author George Eliot (also known as Mary Ann Cross,) and physicist Michael Faraday are all buried within the confines of the enormous 37-acre cemetery. And if the big names laid to rest here aren't enough to impress you, maybe the history behind Highgate will do the trick.

In the early 1800s, London experienced a huge population boom. With the rise of the industrial revolution people flocked to the city looking for jobs. This caused a slight problem: with the increased population came an increased death rate. Conditions were grimy, disease was running rampant, and those Londoners were dropping like flies. And here's the kicker: they were running out of room for the dead.

Makeshift burial grounds started popping up wherever people could find room- this includes small areas between shops and even in backyards. In many cases, corpses would be wrapped in thin cloth, thrown in shallow graves, and quicklime would be thrown on them to speed up decomposition so the grave could be used again in a few months.

Can you imagine how rank that smelled?

Luckily, around 1830, the government decided that something had to be done about this growing (and festering) problem. They formed The London Cemetery Company and hired an architect, Stephen Geary, and his team to construct a series of new cemeteries around the city called “The Magnificent Seven.” The most magnificent of which turned out to be Highgate.

Beauty does not come easy. It took three years to landscape the seventeen-acre area, fifteen of which were set aside for members of the church of England and two for dissenters, or non-members. The cemetery was dedicated to St. James in May 1839.

The most interesting about Highgate Cemetery is probably its unique landscaping and architecture. An area in the heart of the cemetery, aptly named Egyptian Avenue, presents sixteen vaults on either side of a wide avenue in a classical Egyptian style. Nearby is the Circle of Lebanon, constructed in the same architectural style, which also features a number of vaults for interment.

Over the years, Highgate Cemetery became quite the fashionable place to be buried, boasting a number of large monuments for wealthy and prominent figures. Poets, novelists, scientists, artists, and political figures all sought after Highgate as their final resting place. Karl Marx was buried there in 1883, and his grave is one of the most visited in England.

Unfortunately, with the onset of the world wars in the beginning of the 20th century, people devoted less money to funeral costs and burials. Interments at Highgate began to decline, the property became overgrown, and the London Cemetery Company disintegrated.

But fear not! You could join the greats in calling the cemetery your final resting place. Friends of Highgate Cemetery was formed in 1975 to save the burial ground, and Highgate is still an operating cemetery with up to 70

internments and 30-35 plots sold each year. And if you'd like to actually see the cemetery during your time here on Earth, tours are available every day of the week and cost only a few pounds. Visit highgate-cemetery.org for more info.

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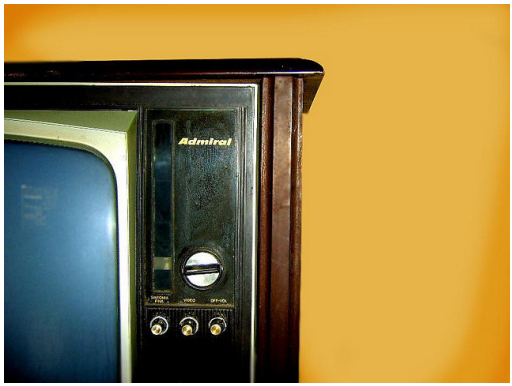
90's TV Shows That I Enjoy (Now That I'm Older)

Issue #7 Nostalgia
By: Rachel Bellwoar



I may never have gotten the hang of sports as a kid (softball consisted of picking dandelions and soccer was "don't get kicked") but I'll give my younger self credit for making a solid amount of good media choices in the nineties. All of those classic Judy Garland, Humphrey Bogart, Audrey Hepburn, and John Wayne movies I rewound again and again on VHS were the start of a beautiful friendship with silver screen classics. Multiple viewings of Star Wars have not brought me up to the level of fandom where I have memorized every detail of each scene by heart, but there have been some heroic light saber battles on my living room rug, the series' empowering credit music playing in the background. And as for Blue's Clues—name me the episode and I'll tell you the clues.

It actually wasn't until the nineties were behind me and the twenty-first century had begun that I was made aware of the more critically acclaimed creative works produced in that decade, particularly in regards to

television. Some I hadn't been old enough to watch. Others weren't on my radar and unknown by me to exist (a fate that will never transpire again due to weekly TV Guide readings and IMDB). Nonetheless, in order to correct that wrong, I have since watched these nineties programs, letting my VCR rest for a bit in exchange for DVD's episode selection feature.

1. ER (1994)

Few shows have managed to keep running for 15 seasons and maintain their quality, but ER makes a pretty strong go at it (and until a certain character gets hit by a bus in season 13, I'd say they did pretty well). With a constantly rotating cast, the program had a remarkable success rate of keeping Country General Hospital staffed with new, strong characters, that made the transition of the old doctors going out much easier than it could have been.

The real test came when the show hit a definite midpoint by the end of season six, with George Clooney and Julianna Margulies official departure. By replacing them with an equally (and if I dare say it, more) captivating couple, played by Goran Visnjic and Maura Tierney, the show was able to continue for nine more seasons, where most would have caved at that loss of star power. While confusing medical jargon flew and patients make you cry, for forty-five minutes you were glued to the screen.

Fans who watched the original seven doctors (and nurse) develop over that long period of time were often rewarded through the writers' commitment to maintaining continuity (and dropping the occasional reference to old episodes that only long-term audience members would catch). Yet it was easy for people who had never watched to jump in on a random episode as well. That's an admirable feat and, with the conclusion of the various Law and Order franchises coming sooner than later (SVU being the lone entity still standing), ER may have been one of the last of its

kind.

2. Xena: Warrior Princess (1995)

I will admit that this show may not be as “critically” acclaimed as the others but it certainly has its cult following, and for good reason. With her trusty chakram at the ready (think sharp Frisbee that acts as a weapon), Xena could kick and flip like no other warrior princess, plus she has that war cry you only wish you could emulate. Like the best Greek superheroes, she had a trusty sidekick (Gabrielle), a well-meaning, occasional groupie (Joxer “the Mighty”), a god in love with her (Ares), and a crazy-awesome female nemesis (Callisto). Sometimes heavy handed in the moral message (markedly so in season one) I stand by this marvelous show as being exceedingly entertaining up until the very last note.

3. Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1997)

Like the show Cougar Town, which frequently, publicly, regrets its show title, I often fear that the name, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, hurts it. Unfairly assumed to be the antithesis of cool, Buffy is judged as corny by potential new viewers who don’t know better, and assume it’s another Twilight, The Vampire Diaries, or True Blood, where you’ve got good vampires versus bad boy vampires showing their fangs, warring for the human lead character/love interest’s affection. And do these programs have that plot thread in common? Yes… but Buffy came first and if it receives any flack for its successors’ exaggerations and melodramatics, that’s a pop culture travesty.

Not only did Buffy come first, but it was (and is) the best of its genre. You’ve got the quirkiest, most easily quotable dialogue (“My whole life just flashed before my eyes. I got to get me a life!”), a wonderfully winsome cast, season-long “Big Bad” arcs, emotional depth, and wooden stakes. Lots of wooden stakes. And even if there are people who still don’t know what they’re missing when

they pass the seasons on sale at their local Target, there are also a lot of people who have realized it and for that, one can be content.

4. Freaks and Geeks (1999)

So many young actors appeared on this show, whether as leads or guest roles, that have since broke out and can be seen working in television and movies today. Judd Apatow, who created the show, appears to have found many of his go-to cast members, including James Franco, Jason Segel, and Seth Rogen, through this one-season marvel. Even beyond that, you can't watch an episode and not spot someone you didn't recognize before (Rashida Jones from Parks and Recreation, Matt Czuchry from The Good Wife, etc.).

At its seventies-set heart, this high school drama which was prematurely canned, stole fans hearts by not having the quirky dialogue that worked so well for Buffy. Instead it embraced the awkwardness of teenage interaction, and for that it was loved.

5. The Sopranos (1999)

Last but not least, we have The Sopranos, a world I'm still fairly new to, but unsurprisingly enjoy. In a nutshell, the show features Italian mobsters living in my home state of New Jersey, dealing with nagging mothers one minute and watching mallards in swimming pools the next. The Godfather with a twist, it was one of HBO's first strikes at narrative television along with Oz, and it works because of the balance it keeps between illegal activity and family troubles.

Every one of the programs discussed above is memorable and some of them have even earned a position on my top ten TV list of all time. Despite coming late to the game, it really doesn't matter when you watch these shows because their content is timeless. The only thing that matters is that you do. Just press the power button on your remote control and hit play. There will be no

regrets, only, perhaps, a little nostalgia.

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Louisiana Voodoo's Immortal Spell on Media

Issue #8 Rituals
By: Lauren Pickens

October is the season for everything supernatural and spooky to start filling up tv slots, which is right up my alley. It's even better when the show is based on historical events; there is something about knowing that true events inspired the story that just up the fear factor. American history has its fair share of mysterious folklore but the South seems to be the epicenter for many of these legends. New Orleans, Louisiana is without a doubt the most famous Southern city in terms of mysticism. Although the city has been known for its voodoo culture for decades, popular media still play on the history of the city and magic that surrounds it for inspiration. The theme of Louisiana Voodoo traditions can be seen in television, movies, and books such as Anne Rice's famous gothic novels. For example, this fall, the newest installment of American Horror Story will take place in New Orleans. Although many television shows that draw upon Southern history fabricate a large portion of it, in the case of

Louisiana voodoo the truth is

stranger than fiction.

These legends date back to the era of the colonization in the South. New Orleans was a major port for the slave trade as well as a melting pot for many Europeans, though the city is most known for its heady French community. After the Haitian revolt in the 1700's a large Haitian community began to form in the city and meld with the cultures that were already inhabiting the city. The Haitian culture was rich and spiritual and quickly began to saturate the city with color, giving the French city the vibrant flare that we know today.

The combination of Haitian voodoo practices and Catholicism are the roots of Louisiana voodoo and this marriage continues to entrance us. Although the practices of voodoo did become popular throughout all the communities within the city, it remained hidden and taboo. There are a few famous practitioners whose names are still approached within trepidation today, and one of the more sadistic voodoo priestess will make an appearance in this fall's tv line up.

This fall FX is premiering the third season of American Horror story and they are calling upon the history of Louisiana voodoo for the inspiration of this year's story line. The show will be set in the present as well as in the mid 1800's. One of the main characters for this season who is based in the past is inspired by the life of New Orleans socialite Delphine LaLaurie.

Born in 1777, she moved to Louisiana from Ireland with her family at a young age and they quickly became prominent members of the New Orleans community, though she became infamous for her own exploits later in her life. LaLaurie was married three times throughout the duration of her life, with her first two husbands meeting untimely deaths. By the time that her third husband passed away LaLaurie had acquired a substantial amount of money and with this money she purchased

property within the center of New Orleans. It was a large estate for the middle of the city and she even had a slave quarters built near the mansion.

Although she appeared poised and polite to the public eye, another side to her came out when the slave quarters was set afire in 1834. When policemen arrived to the scene of the incident they discovered that one of Delphine's slaves was chained to the stove. The officers worked to unchain her but the woman confessed to having chained herself to the stove in an attempt to end her own life. She told the authorities that she wanted to die for fear of a punishment that her mistress was going inflict on her. LaLourie was a practitioner of dark magic. She used voodoo that required blood sacrifices, which she used her servants for.

Upon searching the house it was discovered that she was torturing her slaves in a room located on the top floor. It is said that she was using the blood and bodies of her slaves to perform voodoo spells to keep herself young and powerful. Although the police were not too concerned with her treatment of her slaves the elite Southern class had to keep up appearances and did not appreciate her vulgar displays in the public eye. A mob was formed and LaLourie fled the city for Paris where she died a mysterious death.

In traditional voodoo practices the practitioner worships the high god Bon diue, however in voodoo practice it is known that this god does not interfere in human affairs and instead serves as a creator who only observes, which is why much attention is paid to the Lao or spirits who guide the practitioners. The Lao are individual entities that are led by Bon duie, with whom the practitioners can speak to and also be taken over by.

One of the most mysterious and interesting parts of voodoo culture are the possession ceremonies in which individuals invite spirits to temporarily inhabit their bod-

ies. The ceremonies begin with a prayer and an animal sacrifice, the prayer shows dedication and respect to the Lao and the sacrifice was believed to rejuvenate the spirit and transfer nature's energy back to the Lao. When the Lao is believed to be within the human plane then the practitioner offers their body to be taken over. The possessions were known to last hours, and largely consisted of dancing and the reciting of sacred songs. However, in some instances those who were possessed relayed messages of prophecy, warnings, or advice to the congregation.

Although the traditional workings of Louisiana voodoo are certainly not as gory as the actions of Delphine LaLaurie, they are still just as mysterious and fascinating. After learning so much about the history of Louisiana voodoo and how it has manifested itself in such horrifying ways I can see why voodoo still remains such a large part of the culture within the city. If like me you're a fan of the supernatural genre then comment below and tell me your favorite book, movie, or tv show that has used Louisiana voodoo for inspiration!

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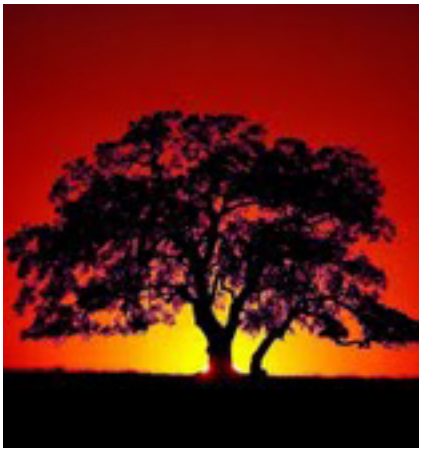
My Bubbie Always Told Me



Issue #9 Stories We Tell
By: Alez Mazzo

"We learn who we are and who we set our intention to become, through our own story, and through the stories of others." My grandmother, whom I call Bubbie, said to me after we discussed the event with Sonia Sotomayor on October 22, 2013.

I was aware of whom Sonia Sotomayor was, prior to the event, and knew it was a big deal she chose to come to speak to the students and faculty of Arcadia. To be honest however, I wasn't personally interested in attending the event because I never followed politics and am also one of those lazy college students that doesn't take advantage of all of the opportunities offered on campus. (Even though I know I probably should.)

My Bubbie knew about the event and brought it to my attention before I even saw it advertised on campus. She was a huge fan and was dying to attend Sonia's lecture. I had class on the night of the event so I didn't plan on trying to get tickets and told my Bubbie I wouldn't be able to go. She was disappointed that I was missing out on such a wonderful opportunity.

On the day of the event my night class wound up getting cancelled. I highly considered taking this opportunity to work on homework or more likely watch some shows on Netflix and take a

nap. However I thought of my Bubbie and how much she would love to go see Sonia. I was able to get two tickets to the event and called my Bubbie up with the news. You would have thought I told her she just won the lottery.

My Bubbie of course insisted we get a seat by the front and her eyes lit up as Sonia entered the room to begin the event. I could tell how happy my Bubbie was that she was able to see her speak, and more importantly that I was there with her sharing the moment. She listened intently and every so often told me to write something down when Sonia said something particularly relevant or something my Bubbie found important. I could tell she felt honored to simply be in her presence. When the event was over I was very grateful that my Bubbie encouraged me to attend.

We didn't sit and listen to a political figure speak about government mumbo-jumbo. We sat and heard parts of a beautiful story of the life behind Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. My Bubbie also always told me, "You gotta do what you gotta do, to get where you wanna get." Whenever I'm feeling lazy or unmotivated I picture my Bubbie saying that to me. This helps me to remember if I want to be successful and go places in life I have to work for it. No one is handed anything and Sonia Sotomayor is a perfect example of that. She came from an upbringing where the odds weren't likely that she would grow up and graduate from Princeton, go on to law school and eventually become a Supreme Court Justice. She came from a low income family and neither of her parents went on to receive a higher education. She wanted a better life for herself and to also help

others around her. Sonia was persistent in her studies and achieved her goals because of what she wanted. She did what she had to do, in order to get where she wanted to get.

From as long as I can remember, my Bubbie has showered me with books; colorful, illustrated books. Books that told stories. Stories that she helped me relate to my own life. One particular book I will always remember is the book Tiger Flower, by Robert Vavra and illustrated by Fluer Cowles. It was a special book that my Bubbie only shared with me and kept a secret amongst the book shelves of a million stories. It is out of print now and considered an expensive collectible. The beautiful illustrations pull you into the story of a tiger in love with a flower, living in a world where everything that's small is now large, and everything that's big is now small.

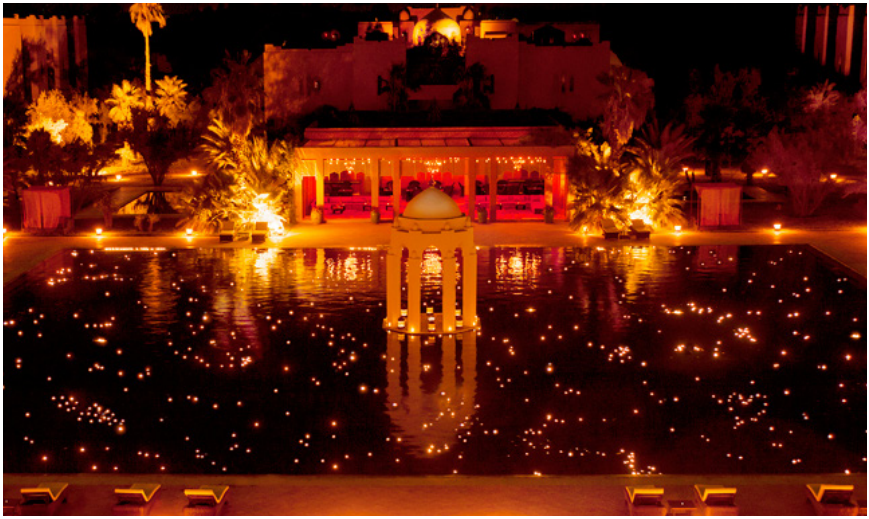
It was a story that sparked my imagination. I was taught at such an impressionable age to find wonder in the story, as it relates to my world. My Bubbie encouraged me, like Sonia Sotomayor's grandmother had, to be a sponge, soaking up all there is to learn in life and use it to prosper. To be adventurous, to listen to the stories of people and be accepting of those who are unlike ourselves. To always remember the small world from which I come, where I've formed my lifelong values. But to also expand out into the larger world where I'll listen and hear the stories that will paint a mural of humanity.

At the lecture, Sonia told us that the reason she agreed to come to Arcadia, is because we place a large importance on Global Studies which has allowed us to become such a diverse university. Not just diverse in ethnicity but diverse in worldly experiences and global knowledge. She encouraged us to take advantage of the liberal arts school which we belong to and attempt a class in the arts, outside of our majors. My Bubbie has always supported my desire to pursue arts in addition to

my typical academic courses.
Throughout high school and my college experience I have developed a love for ceramics. Ceramics allows me to relieve stress from the heavy workload of my academic classes and express myself in the form of art. Many of the pieces I have made have come from my Bubbie's inspiration. Her love for the arts was indeed passed down to me and I believe it is important to incorporate into any and every lifestyle.

Sonia suggested that learning something within the arts, better prepares us for communication with people from all walks of life. For it is through communication, via our stories that we might become a world open and tolerant and peaceful to those of all different backgrounds and experiences. Who knows, the personal story might be the vehicle to felling empathy and connection to the human experience, forging a way to a more peaceful understanding world.

My Bubbie then went on to tell me was that the main reason she was happy I saw Sonia speak is because she feels she is a hero. Coming from a place of poverty and a woman of color, she has risen to the highest level of decision making in our country; a Supreme Court Justice which entitles her to a life-time commitment to truth, fairness, humanity, and justice.



The 10 Perfect Vacations I'll Never Take

Issue #10 Perfection
By : Shana

I am a traveler and I have been all of my young life. I will go anywhere just for the sake of going. Settling into a time in my life when my traveling has become less than feasible has been challenging my general wanderlust. Lack of free time and money have kept me from going on any long trip for over a year now and most likely will for awhile.

So, while I wait, I have sought to find something to satiate my desire for all things travel through my own online explorations of what I like to call "The Perfect Vacations I'll Never Take." Instead of searching for cheap flights and friends floors, I prefer to spend my time looking up the most luxurious of accommodations in settings almost too magical to be real. This lack of practicality really allows a girl to dream. I don't have to worry about not being able to

go because I know that there is a 99.9% (I always leave .1% for miracles) that I never will. They are everything you've always wanted before you even knew they existed. Things listed as regular amenities are things I normally file under the "dream" category. They are perfect because I will never have to find out if they live up to the incredible experiences pictured and described on their various websites.

Below I have compiled a list of 10 destinations out of the countless I have found that are real world replicas of childhood fantasies in the minds of us all. So hold onto your imaginary wallet: we are going in…

Giraffe Manor

Many a childhood dream have revolved around some sort of animal. I went through my horse girl stage, the panda bear era, and of course both sides of the cat and dog debate. So, even though giraffes never made it on my obsession list, I know that both the childhood me and adult me would not regret a visit to Giraffe Manor in Nairobi, Kenya.

Giraffe Manor has a whopping 10 luxury double ensuite bedrooms with 1930's style décor, fine dining from the manor's master chef that includes delicacies from the surrounding area, a large cozy sitting room complete with fireplace and phonograph, and A GIANT BACKYARD FULL OF FREE ROAMING GIRAFFES WHICH YOU CAN HAND-FEED FROM YOUR WINDOW. Yes, that's right. It's a Disney movie in real life where you actually live amongst animals in the finest of accommodations. If that doesn't bring out your inner spirit animal, I don't know what will.

TSALA TREETOP LODGES

The magic of the tree house has long been a staple of youth. Maybe you built your own in the tiny tree in your backyard and watched it break as you climbed into it for the first time, or maybe you had no trees and built one with pillows inside. Regardless, there was always something intriguing about a house that could only be reached by climbing.

Nestled amongst the treetops between Knysna and Plettenberg Bay in Western Cape, South Africa, Tsala Treetop Lodges provide the highest quality tree house accommodation. Boasting 10 “magical private suites” and 6 two-bedroomed villas all with the finest of furniture and appliances as well as their own infinity pools in the sky, Tsala offers an experience like no tree house you’ve been in before. Dining is in a large glass wall dining room or on a spacious outdoor deck. And don’t worry about not being able to keep up with the Kardashians in any way, because there is complimentary Wi-fi, lounges with full stocked libraries and bars, underfloor heating and air conditioning, and something described as “pampering services” … on the top of a forest… in South Africa.

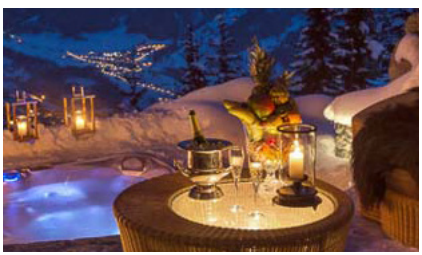
ATLANTIS: THE PALM
I’m not sure I ever imagined wanting to live underwater when I was younger but I had my fair share of underwater tea parties. I think living under a sea of marine life for a week is the logical next step. Over in Dubai, they are making this dream come true for lucky guests of Atlantis: The Palm who have the pleasure of staying in their Poseidon and Neptune Suites. Both suites feature

three stories and spectacular views from your bedroom and bathroom of Ambassador Lagoon, a marine paradise with over 65,000 animals carefully tended to by 200 marine specialists. I think it would probably rank high on the list of best bathrooms ever. You can also dine in the underwater restaurant, go tubing through a shark-infested lagoon (You are surrounded by glass on your ride, don't worry!), plummet down a Leap of Faith water slide from the Aztec-resembling temple, or even swim with a few playful new friends in Dolphin Bay and Sea Lion Point. To put this resort in perspective, I haven't even listed half of the nautical and luxury amenities.

ICEHOTEL

If you have lived around snow, you have probably tried to build your own ice cave or igloo at some point. Mine usually were incredibly dangerous and unstable and were too small for me to even go inside. ICEHOTEL, both accommodation and art, is located in the icy tundra of Jukkasjärvi, Sweden. The hotel is famous for being "the world's first and largest hotel built of snow and ice." Its beauty is unrivaled in the perfection of its "art" rooms as carved by masters from around the world. Possible activities include snowmobiling, ice sculpting, dog sledding, horseback tours, ice driving, learning about the local natives (the Sámi), and fantastic views of the effervescent Northern Lights. As long as you are comfortable in 20° temperatures, they you can have to most magical ice and snow filled adventure that put you as close to Santa as you can get.

CHALET TROIS COURONNES

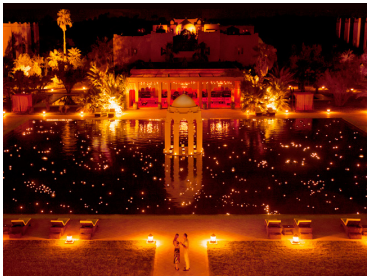


The log cabin: you have built them with blocks and probably have set foot in a normal one for a camping trip or even a visit. I have always loved the aesthetic and the romantic notion that accompanies the log cabin. In scouring the Internet's best of worldwide accommodation, I have found that the I-have-buckets-of-money-and-I-don't-know-what-to-do-with-it translation for log cabin is actually "chalet." Might I introduce you to Chalet Trois Couronnes. Up in the snowy mountains of Verbier, Switzerland, the chalet provides more than my tiny brain could imagine for a snowy camping trip: a massive indoor pool, an outdoor jacuzzi, a steam room, a sauna, a private cinema, an art gallery, parking for eight cars, integrated surround sound and video throughout the building, a personal assistant, chef and driver, and—in case you decide to make the mistake of leaving—close proximity to some of the finest skiing in Switzerland.

VELLASSARU

As a kid and as an adult, we all have been asked the question: "If you were stranded on an island and could only take one thing with you, what would it be?" My answer is that I would be stranded on Velassaru in the Maldives and I one bring one very lucky friend. A number of accommodation options await you on this private island, but none better than the "Water Suite". You can enjoy the finest, blissful solitude in the most hi-tech beach villa with expansive views, (another) infinity pool, an iPad (I don't know why), multiple showers, a bathtub, and full butler service. It is probably the most secluded and best beach vacation you'll have without ever leaving your housing.

TAJ PALACE MARRAKECH



Castles are always on the list of dream homes for young girls, but I've decided to step it up another notch because I can. Morocco is home to some stunning architecture and design, and the Taj Palace Marrakech is no exception. Combining Moorish, Indian, Venetian design elements, the building itself is a masterpiece surrounded by 55 hectares (That's about 130 acres) of exquisite landscaping. What more could a girl want? How about the Royal Suite encompassing the entire top floor of the palace with three bedrooms with king beds, a massive terrace, more than one butler, turndown service, and the best views of the Atlas Mountains, the beautiful, expansive palace pool that is lit by tiny lights at night, or maybe the spa that spans across almost an acre of the property? If that is still not enough, try one of the palaces many bars, lounges and restaurants, including this sunset dining experience so romantic that it includes the "picturesque Palmeraie landscape" and "seductive music." Ow, ow!

BAYAN TREE SEY-CHELLES

The bane of all parents' complex and thought out vacation plans is the hotel pool. A natural child attractor, the pool is nearly always a child's favorite part of any vacation. I was always a fan of any pool that included a water slide or any sort of waterfall. A pool built for dreamers, and apparently famous musicians and actors, finds its home at the Bayan Tree Seychelles in Mahe Island amidst the Indian Ocean. The infinity pool hangs over to look as though it travels

right into the ocean. With the seclusion of the high-class resort, it is the pinnacle of sanctity and luxury and the exact opposite of all the pools you swam in as a kid. There are six private villas which offer more amenities than a regular house and most of which also contain their own private pool. There also seven luxury dining options, including the ultimate in room service and a poolside bar. You could expect nothing less from a property formerly owned by George Harrison of The Beatles and Peter Sellers of The Pink Panther film series.

AMANGIRI

The old American trip out west is a childhood classic more found in 80s movies than in modern childhood. My family has made the trip on several occasions. It involves a lot of desert, and heat, and horseback riding, and heat, and rocks, and oh, did I mention HEAT? And then there is Amangiri. Translating to 'peaceful mountain,' Amangiri occupies 600 of desert in Canyon Point, Utah, close to the Arizona border. If you could see it from the sky, it would look quite out of place in its natural surroundings. Up close, it looks just as beautiful as the rocks and desert it is nestled in. In both its variety of private suites and four bedroom villas, Amangiri offers the ultimate in minimalism style luxury and comfort while connecting its guests directly with the stark and beautiful desert landscape. It boasts several indoor and outdoor lounges, a pool that wraps around the massive rock formation jutting into the center of the resort, a cellar and private dining area, and art gallery, a library, and a pavilion with panoramic views. The only thing that you'll still need from that childhood roadtrip is the sunscreen.

TCS EXPEDITIONS – AROUND THE WORLD WITH FOUR SEASONS

Sometimes, as a child, I would sit and imagine what it would be like to travel to, well, everywhere. In the spirit of the classic quote from 'Ellie" in Disney Pixar's classic UP, "Adventure is out there!" On a college budget, many have gone on the epic backpacking trip through Europe amongst hostels, the couches of friends, and sometimes even bus benches. Why not instead fly around the world in a private jet, staying only at Four Seasons' best resorts in cities all over the world? A mere 23 days later, with no expense spared, you will have reached Los Angeles, Kona, Hawaii, Bora Bora, French Polyneisa, Sydney, Australia, Bali, Indonesia, Chiang Mai or Chiang Rai, Thailand, Taj Mahal and Mumbai, India, Istanbul, Turkey and London. From watersports to food tasting to cultural dances, you will have tried it all and then some from a company who insists, "Traveling by private jet is the only way to go."

Now doesn't it feel like you've just gone on the best vacation of your life? The trick is to not look at the price tag. The Send Shana on any of these Vacations Fund is now and has always been accepting any and all extremely large donations.

Stop Sending Me Dick Pics

Issue #11 Against the Grain
By: Brittany

I will never forget the first time I saw a dick pic while sitting in my Honors Biology class freshman year of high school. The girl sitting next to me laughed as she passed me her phone and said, "Look what this random guy sent me." It was a lot like that time when we had to dissect frogs. I could never unsee what I saw that day. And I was very, very confused. Don't get me wrong, I knew exactly what it was. I just didn't know why I was being shown it. Let's just clear the air and admit that we have all had our encounters with "dick pics". They've been going around as long as I can remember, and it's only getting worse with the rising uproar of Snapchat.

I'll be honest and say that I don't necessarily hate dick pics. I just don't understand them. I mean, I understand that it's a picture of a penis, but again, WHY? What makes you think I want to see that right now? Did you happen to capture your dick in good lighting so it looks slightly bigger than it actually is, and now is your one and only chance to show off? Are you looking for feedback? Or are you really expecting me to reply with n00dz of myself? That's funny, man.

You're going to have to work a little harder, because your dick pic isn't very persuasive.

And what am I supposed to do with the picture after I look at it? Do I save it, do I delete it, do I show it to my friends? Do I lie and say your dick is looking really pretty today? Or do I just cover my eyes and pretend that I wasn't just forced to see your genitals?

I think that's the main problem I have with dick pics. It feels a bit like sexual assault. If you were to run into my classroom and randomly whip out your dick, it's very likely you would face charges of some sort. So when you're sending me dick pics through Snapchat while I'm sitting in my lecture hall, it's pretty much the same thing. Or even if I am in bed, do you really think I wanted to see your dick before going to sleep? That is no way to charm a lady. Unless I specifically ask you for a "sexy pic ;)" there is really no reason for you to be showing it to me.

I'm sure a huge part of it has to do with the male gaze, the way men objectify women. Men want to see us naked, so they think we want to see them naked. Which I'm not saying isn't true. I can totally appreciate a good-looking penis, sure. But only if I am choosing to see said penis. When you are sending me a ten second long Snapchat of it, there is no turning back once I open that Snapchat. I guess I could just close it, but let's be real— if you're going to send me a dick pic, I am going to stare at it out of pure confusion and fascination (or pity…). I've asked a handful of my female friends if they like dick pics, and not a single one said yes. They all seemed to agree that they just don't know what to do with them.

But for men, it's completely different. If we send a guy a picture of our tits, they're going to appreciate it, no questions asked. There is a double standard here. One that, for once, really sucks for men, but totally benefits women. Dick pics don't seem to do anything to amuse us,

but our tit pics— those are powerful. You could get a guy to do almost anything just for a peek, because let's be honest, tits are just a lot prettier than dicks. But keep in mind that your tit pics are literally being used just for some guy to get off. And what are you getting out of it? Absolutely nothing, except maybe some weird useless dick pic. Not to mention that there are some sick fucks out there, and no one is to be trusted.

A girl's reputation is so easily destroyed thanks to all the slut shaming our society does. While if a guy's dick pic gets around, no one really cares. No one wanted it to begin with. And that includes me. I didn't want to see that dick pic that day during my freshman bio class, and I certainly don't want to see it now.

Photo credit: http://www.flickr.com/photos/39341083@N02/5835187305/in/photolist-9TCRTF-a5EZXq-it5UNd

Nude Dudes

Issue #12 Naked Truth
By: Mike

You've just finished your workout. It was chest day, and you knocked out some great sets on the bench. You finished up with some core work because that girl who was staring at you from the cardio loft (she was totally staring at you) was doing abs, too. You grab your towel and bottle of water and head off to the locker room, content with the work you've done.

You turn the corner and head to your locker, #116. Nothing odd here. No sights to see. You sit down on the bench in front of your locker, unlock the locker, and grab your protein. You throw two scoops into your Blender Bottle (because Dom Mazzetti said so). You're halfway through that shake when you turn around and see what you were hoping to avoid that day.

A naked, flabby, hairy, old guy.

An old guy who probably didn't work out that day.

An old guy who came to the gym specifically to be naked.

You're a little perturbed, but you've become pretty tolerant of the old naked dudes at your gym. "They've got nowhere else to be naked," you think.

It's weird, but it's like a central cog in the culture of being old–old dudes head to the gym specifically to be naked.

You finish your shake and head over to the sink to rinse out your shaker cup. On the way there, you see four more old naked guys. Their workout for the day? Two sets of removing a shoe. They shed the rest of their wardrobe and begin their takeover of the locker room. Content with getting in their cardio by pacing in front of the mirror, these old guys always seem to be looking for something. Something they can't find. Maybe they're the only ones who see it.

Now I'm not one to judge. I hope, one day, that I'll be comfortable (and crazy) enough to meander around a locker room naked just because I can. That's a perk only the elderly can truly enjoy. But these old dudes are always in the way. You picked a locker in the middle of the row because there weren't locks on the adjacent lockers? Great, some old dude will take the locker next to yours and be sitting there—you guessed it, naked—when you return from hammering your shoulders.

Maybe we're the weird ones—those of us who go to the gym to workout, and, I don't know, remain clothed. Maybe the contingent of old naked dudes from each gym nationwide meets every Sunday night to discuss the following week's plan for nakedness. The times, the specific areas of the locker room, the right topics to discuss. Maybe they talk about how long they can sit in the sauna before it looks like they actually came to the gym to do something.

There was probably one really bold old, naked dude who thought about actually working out. He probably left the locker room one day wearing the shortest shorts he could find, a sleeveless shirt he used to paint houses in the late 1960s, and a headband. He probably wore Nike Air Monarchs. I'm assuming he was shunned. He probably had to leave that gym and find another gym where he could be naked, assuming he learned from his mistake.

Old dudes love being naked; that's something that anyone

can surmise from just one visit to a gym, health club, or pool locker room. But in those locker rooms lies an existential question: why—why do old dudes love being naked?

Furthermore, why do these oldtimers insist upon being naked and in the way? It would be one thing if they congregated in the far corner of the locker room, discussing Citizen Kane or reflecting on their first trip to a Brooklyn Dodgers game. But that's not what they do. That would be too easy. That would make sense.

No, old naked dudes have to be in front of the mirror. Old naked dudes have to be lurking over your shoulder, always on the verge of asking you how cell phones work. Old naked dudes have to be in front of the mirror, staring at themselves. Or maybe staring through themselves, figuring something out. Maybe that's where the world's smartest go just to think.

But any solution for why they're in the locker room still doesn't resolve the fact that they're never wearing clothes. Venturing into a locker room at an L.A. Fitness is like an episode of Naked and Afraid—except you're clothed, while still being very, very afraid.

One of the most memorable experiences I've had in a locker room involved the untimely appearance of two old naked dudes at a basketball tournament when I was 13. My team played poorly against one of the better travel teams in the area, and our coaches took us to the men's locker room at CCBC (Community College of Baltimore County) Dundalk to yell at us for our performance. Halfway through our coach's talk, two old, naked guys stumbled on out of the shower and headed toward our huddle.

The locker room was small, and there wasn't a way to get to the other room besides going directly through our huddle. We knew this. The old naked dudes knew this. After a short standoff, our huddle shrunk a great deal,

and the old dudes found a way to skate by, almost pressed up against the wall. Some of my teammates, unfamiliar with the typical locker room procedures and etiquette common to the old naked dude, demanded we leave the locker room. Our post-game talk was moved to the hallway.

I've spent a lot of time pondering why this phenomenon exists, and I don't have answers. In fact, even the most advanced scientists struggle daily when trying to decode this mystery. It may be one of those questions that just remains unanswered—because no answer will ever be good enough. Some people have even deemed it the eighth wonder of the world.

If my reasoning isn't good enough, check out these wise words from comedian Dana Carvey, who offers his analysis on one of the world's greatest unsolved mysteries.

Known as one of the world's foremost authorities on this issue, Carvey's wise words start around the 12:15 mark of his act.

Good luck out there, young locker-room goers. Just remember, keep your gaze eye-level. That's said to neutralize an old dude's longing to remain naked.

13 Interview Questions Not to Ask A Thirteen Year Old

Issue #13 Thirteen
By: Sierra Altland

In an attempt to unlock one of life's oldest and most complex mysteries, I seem to have fallen quite a bit short. Trying to figure out the mind of a thirteen-year-old boy is no easy feat. While many of us have assumptions; "All he cares about are video games and boobs", it's still very hard to investigate. Mainly because getting thorough answers, and more specifically holding a conversation with a thirteen-year-old boy, is a rare occurrence. I have learned that it is harder to get a detailed answer than a straight answer. Plain, simple, straight answers are the easy part. "Yes" and "No" are the main go-to words, but ask for an explanation or some description, and you will get about 5 more words on top of that. Astounding.

So my original idea to present the world with the breakthrough knowledge of what thirteen-year-olds actually think has transformed into an expose, if you will, of the 13 questions that will get you nowhere when talking to a thirteen-year-old.

Here we go…

1. Q: What do you think about girls?

A: "Whether I think they are cute or not"

I think this one is by far my favorite question mainly because of the response. So blunt, so simple, so obvious. Realistically, I would have loved to hear about some interactions he's had with girls, perhaps how they act different socially than boys. Something along the lines of "they are loud and care a lot about how they look", but his answer is much more telling. It's reminds me of The Most Interesting Man in the World commercial, "I don't always drink beer. But when I do, I prefer Dos Equis", except it goes, "I don't always think about girls. But when I do, I think whether they are cute or not". My follow-up to that question (Question 2 below), has a very appealing response as well.

2. Q: Do you have/have you had a girlfriend? If so, what is/was that like?

A: "Not right now."

I think I missed something. Or he missed something. Or he dodged the question. Did he have one before? Is there a prospective future girlfriend in the picture? I don't know! Either way, I have found out no descriptive information about what thirteen-year-old dating culture is like. Do they Snapchat each other a "cute" duck face with the caption "Do you like me blushing emoji"? The world might never know.

3. Q: Have you ever kissed a girl?

A: "No."

Like I said in the beginning, straight answers aren't hard to come by but you will get nothing more. On that same wavelength…

4. Q: Do you do drugs? Alcohol? Do you know people who do?

A: "No to all three"

Part of me thinks this might be the truth, another part

doesn't but whatcha gonna do? If it is true, it's nice to know some teenagers still haven't been directly influenced by drugs and alcohol yet; maybe there's some hope for the fight against younger substance abusers. Then again, he's one of a million thirteen-year-olds, which probably doesn't give me the most accurate of results.

5. Q: If you won the lottery, what would you do with the money?

A: "Spend some of it and save the rest."

How lucratively responsible! I think when I was thirteen I would have said "buy a nice car, a house, thousands of concert tickets, a laptop, an iPod…" the list would have gone on forever. I would have fulfilled my angsty teenaged dreams to see All Time Low a bazillion times, but kudos to him.

6. Q: If you had to work on only one project for the rest of the year, what would it be?

A: "Beating video games."

Well there it is, the video game assumption is correct. Boobs must not be too far away! But seriously, that would be a thrilling year devoted to playing and beating as many games as possible.

7. Q: Describe an event that was so much fun that you will never forget it.

A: "Getting my own cell phone"

Wow, I think this might be a bit of an overstatement, but to each his own. I think it is difficult at 13 to be truly cognizant of when unforgettable life moments are occurring. And I really hope that when he looks back at his life when he was thirteen, he won't consider getting his phone an "unforgettable life moment". I don't quite remember getting my first cell phone, but I do remember that it was a silver oval flip phone and I had to share it with my older sister, yuck. Anyway, it wasn't very memorable, sorry man. I

think my most vivid memory from when I was thirteen was when I went to my first semi-formal dance. I was so excited and had so many butterflies in my stomach. I finally got to slow dance with this boy that I really liked! It was magical until those innocent butterflies turned into actual stomach upset, and I had to choke back vomit on the dance floor and run to the girl's bathroom. Embarrassing, yes; but we did end up dating for a few months. Take that!

8. Q: What's the hardest thing you've ever done?

A: "Doing study island questions that I don't know how to."

Now, I knew this question would be a bit of a stretch. In what world would I be able to get a thirteen-year-old boy to think critically about his past struggles, perhaps a death, poverty, family issues? I know the emotional depth thing was a bit lacking. But it's nice to know that the hardest thing he's ever had to go through was attempting to complete his online homework questions.

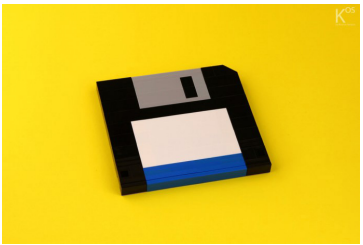
9. Q: What are you most looking forward to in your future?

A: "Driving"

Classic. I can't blame him because it's every teenagers dream to find a way to get the hell out of the house. I understand big picture life goals have to be put on hold when your life experiences are confined under a single roof. In three years, you'll get that car and your next goal can be to just graduate high school.

Next, I would like to introduce you to my favorite part of the interview, the "How Oblivious Are You to 90s Culture" questions. Most of these speak for themselves so feel free to have a decent laugh.

10. Q: Do you know what this is? If not, guess.



A: “It’s a floppy disk
Well played! I truly thought I had him stumped. Oh well, I got him on the next few.

11. Q: Who are these people? Guess, if you don’t know.

A: “William and Kate idk”
Bahahaha, JT and Britney Spears were the royalty of the 90s. What beautiful, half-talented princes and princesses they would have had!

12. Q: Who are these people? Guess, if you don’t know.

A: “Jack and jill.”

Someone seems a bit defeated, that was a bit of a lame guess; although, a pair as infamous as Beavis and Butthead might have been just as popular as Jack and Jill!

13. Q: Who is this? If you don’t know, guess.

A: “Labron James”

Speechless. Shame on you and may you be sentenced to watch Space Jam on repeat for the rest of forever!

Photos by : Kosmas Santosa, dollyblush!, skintightj2009, Guitar Zero, snapclicktripod via Flickr

An Ode to Wawa

Issue #14 Free for All
By: Bri Wink

Dear Wawa,

I don't know if you know this, but you are the light of my life. You are the peanut butter to my jelly, the salt to my pepper, and the Romeo to my Juliet. I would gladly fling myself in front of a dagger if it meant that I could no longer taste your precious caesar wraps upon my lips again.

You, Wawa, single handedly got me through my entire first two years of college. Without you, I would have been a slave to anthropology, general level science classes and various essays on media theory. Every late night stuck in the dusty corners of the library was much better once you arrived. With your deliciously creamy and perfectly cheesy mac and cheese as my guide, I wrote term paper after term paper. You were my rock; the only reliable being in the crazy, unpredictable world of university life.

One time, you sent me a free t-shirt. From that moment on, I knew our love for each other was mutually unstoppable. Even on my darkest and most-hungover days you never judge my attitude or

my appearance. It doesn't matter if I'm in sweatpants or in a prom dress, you still love me for me. We're the Brangelina of the hoagie world, Wawa. Our love is unbreakable.

I know that you are constantly comparing yourself to Sheetz and various other quick marts around the word. Have no fear though, convience store of my heart, because I'm a well-traveled girl and I've tasted what these other corner stores have to offer and they are nothing compared to you. Sheetz may have more options, may have more fancy schmancy designs, but do they put the salsa inside of their quesadillas? I think not.

Whether it's your iced teas, salads or on-the-go fruit containers; your donuts, Frreal machines or legendary Hoagiefest; you have always been there for me, providing a loving shoulder to cry on, a parking lot to partake in shenanigans, and a never-ending stockpile of snacks to drown my feels in.

When I was doing my campus hunting, I made sure to stop and grab a cup of your coffee on the way to tour my potential college. On my high school prom night, I click-clacked my way across your tiled floor in a bright neon green ball gown in dire need of a caramel macchiato. I bought my first (and only) pack of cigarettes at your counter. When my car had two flat tires on the day of my senior homecoming, it was in your parking lot that I awaited help. En route to my high school graduation, I ate a kit kat that I bought at your store. Upon return from my semester in London, the promise of your turkey and cheddar hoagie was the only thing that got me off the plane. You've been a part of my life for so long, a staple in these precious memories, that I can't imagine not having you there.

In fact, for the three months I went without you, not a day went by that I did not think of your morning sizzli's. I proclaimed to all of the United Kingdom that I loved you, more than I would ever love

any other gas station, husband, or cat in my life. I love you not only because you are delicious and easy, but because you allow me the freedom to choose. Unlike other places, I have endless options. I can put whatever I want on my hoagie or in my quesadilla. Anything at all. Extra, extra pickles? Not a problem.

The coffee alone is packed full of unlimited choices. Half cappuccino, half French Vanilla coffee with a splash of Mocha Wake Up? Always possible. Mixing and matching is the spice of life, Wawa, not to mention it's the ultimate freedom. Never once in my entire 22 years of existence have I felt tired of you, and that, Wawa, is true love.

Some people take out their frustrations out at McDonalds. Others need Taco Bell or Pizza Hut or a greasy carton of Chinese food to lift their spirits. There was never anybody else for me, though. Egg rolls and bread sticks and salmonella tacos could never lift my downtrodden spirits. Only you could, Wawa, only you.

Now I know this sounds crazy, declaring unwavering love for a quick mart chain, but that doesn't matter to me. I might be addicted to your convenience, but it's an addiction that I'm okay with. You make me happy, and life is just better with you by my side.

Whaddya say? Be the Wa to my Wa??

Love You Forever,
Your Most Loyal Customer

Cheerleading for Pennies

Issue #15 On Break
By: Kevin Mccann

Over the course of about half a year, Alexa Brenneman put in roughly 300 hours of work. Her compensation? A mere $855 or approximately $2.85 per hour. You might be surprised to learn that Brenneman does not live in some foreign, developing country with low wages. Instead, she was exploited by a multi-billion dollar American industry, the National Football League (NFL). A former NFL cheerleader for the Cincinnati Bengals, Brenneman is now suing her recent employer under the claim that she was paid about $5 less than Ohio's minimum wage of $7.85. According to SportingNews.com, the Bengals are one of five NFL teams to be sued this year by cheerleaders over their criminally low paychecks. While the recent trend of lawsuits is encouraging, there are still many NFL teams that are getting away with mistreating their cheerleaders. NFL cheerleaders must continue to break through this unsettling tradition and not cease until they get the fair and legal wages they have earned.

Lacy T., whose full name has not been disclosed to the public, is the former Oakland Raider cheerleader who jump-started this fight for fair

pay. John Breech of CBS Sports describes that back in January, 2014, Lacy T. filed a lawsuit against the Raiders, claiming that the team only paid its cheerleaders $5 per hour ($3 under the state minimum).

The Raiders' cheerleaders allegedly had to pay for all of their expenses, such as travel and mandated "beautification" processes like fake tans and rigid exercise programs. Additionally, the cheerleaders were required to attend dozens of unpaid practices and various public appearances. As if all of that wasn't bad enough, the Raiders' cheerleaders had to wait to receive their measly paychecks until the season was completely over (over 6 months from the start).

Lacy T. quickly received support from her fellow NFL cheerleaders who had suffered the same cruel treatment from their wealthy employers. On top of the Oakland Raiders and the Cincinnati Bengals, cheerleaders have also filed lawsuits this year against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, New York Jets, and Buffalo Bills. The number of teams in legal trouble over their unlawful hourly wages for cheerleaders will only increase as the outrage over the issue continues to rise.

While it may seem apparent that cheerleaders deserve to make at least minimum wage, some people feel that NFL cheerleaders do not need to be paid more. They argue that these cheerleaders receive extreme benefits, such as regularly being on television, being semi-famous, receiving ample amounts of attention, and having the chance to interact with and potentially marry famous, wealthy NFL football stars. Furthermore, they claim that NFL cheerleaders should not expect a technically part-time job to cover living expenses.

Frankly, none of these arguments make any sense to me. For starters, while being on television on a somewhat regular basis must be fun, it does not provide cheerleaders with enough money

to buy groceries or rent an apartment. Fame is certainly appealing, but in order for it to be fully enjoyed, basic human necessities must be met first. More importantly, while NFL cheerleaders may only be paid for part-time hours, they can only keep their jobs if they treat them like full-time ones.

According to the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders website, "perfection is the common goal." Sarah Thomas of the Huffington Post writes about NFL cheerleaders, "Not only does the time commitment prevent them from holding down a regular job, but the sky-high body and beauty expectations are a constant reminder that they could be dismissed at the slightest jiggle." Cheerleaders must undergo year-round (and largely unpaid) conditioning that leaves them in unnaturally pristine shape. Between their 24/7 requirement to make their bodies perfect and their dozens of unpaid cheerleading hours, how can NFL teams honestly expect their cheerleaders to pick up other jobs to pay their bills?

According to Forbes.com, the average NFL team is worth $1.17 billion and generates $286 million in revenue per year. NFL players are paid tens of millions of dollars each year and The Guardian reports that even team mascots make a minimum of $23,000 per season. With all of this excess money floating around, NFL teams could easily pay their cheerleaders minimum wage at the very least, but sadly, most do not or at least that's how it used to be. The recent lawsuits have started enacting changes in NFL cheerleading practices. ESPN reported that in September of 2014, 8 months after the lawsuit was filed, the Oakland Raiders reached a $1.2 million settlement with its current and former cheerleaders, covering unpaid expenses and minimum wages to all Raiders' cheerleaders who worked from 2010-2013.

This huge success has paved the way for underpaid NFL cheerleaders to go through the courts and receive their deserved wag-

es. Cheerleaders should not be paid less than the hot dog vendor or the person who collects your ticket as you make your way into your favorite team's stadium on Sunday afternoon. Lacy T., the cheerleader who started this movement, was quoted by The Atlantic as saying, "I love the Raiders… but someone has to stand up for all of the women of the NFL who work so hard for the fans and the teams." Whether you like the NFL or not, you should stand with Lacy T. and all the other NFL cheerleaders who just want their legal right to a minimum wage. After all, sometimes traditions need to be broken.

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Catering at Death's Door: A Filipino Memorial

Issue #16 The Re-Issue
By: Frances Dumlao

I'm used to the doom and gloom of cemeteries. Wearing dark, dressy clothes and brooding was something I learned when I attended the funerals and memorials of family, friends and older relatives that have passed away. What started as a drizzle early that morning turned into downpour as my cousins, sister, and I drove into Himlayang Pilipino, a well-known cemetery found 30 minutes outside of Manila, the capital of the Philippines.

The car slowed to a stop. In the middle of the cemetery, in the middle of the rain, stood a large white party tent covering several large tables and chairs and the spot of my grandfather's grave. I tromped through the muddy grass towards the tent. The rest of my family soon followed. The girls wore bright pinks and teals while the boys wore their favorite Sunday polo shirts. As we greeted each other with a single kiss on the cheek, the cater-

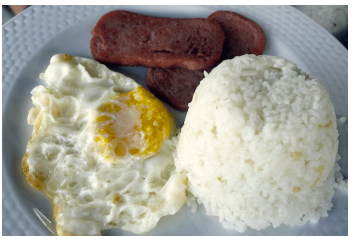
ers in the other tent rushed to get the food ready.

My grandmother had arrived for her birthday surprise, which my family had planned to celebrate with a catered breakfast. Her birthday falls on Christmas Eve, and it was her wish to spend the morning breakfast tradition at the cemetery with grandpa. “Happy Birthday Lola,” I said after kissing her cheek.

This was the first time in a long time that most of my family members in the U.S. and Philippines were together to celebrate Christmas. We all wanted to be here with Lola on her first birthday and holiday season without grandpa. In the Philippines, bringing the family together for a meal around the gravesite of a relative that has passed away is the traditional way to honor and celebrate the life of the deceased.

After saying grace, we chowed down on omelettes, spam ham and rice, a favorite Filipino breakfast combination. Everybody had a share of the pancit, a rice noodle dish that is always served on birthdays, since noodles represent long life for the birthday celebrant. Servers went around filling our glasses and offering coffee, tea, and juice packs. In the middle of the celebration, I found it a bit weird that I was sitting on top of other people’s graves.

Pancit is a traditional Filipino rice noodle always served on birthdays because noodles represent long life for the birthday celebrant. |Photo Credit: dbgg1979 on Flickr



Traditional Filipino breakfast with rice, egg, and spam. | Photo credit: Leslie

We're definitely going to be haunted by dead people, I thought. Shrugging, I dismissed the idea and helped myself to another serving of pancit.

My cousins and I sat at the "kids" table and chit-chatted about my cousin's rich girlfriend whose family owns the Filipino version of Macy's, the new job in the business district of Manila, and debated upon what kind of alcohol to get for tonight's Christmas celebration. Later, my cousins performed comedy sketches of famous Filipino talk show host. My sister and I just looked at each other and awkwardly giggled at the cultural references that went completely over our heads.

We wrapped up the festivities with the rosary, the only time that the morning took a solemn mood. Before leaving, I visited my grandpa's grave one last time. White carnations and candles were placed on his tombstone, a scene I am most familiar with when honoring the dead. I'm not sure if grandpa was there with us as we indulged in our rice and spam in his memory, but I would like to think that he would have enjoyed having a party around his grave.

Nifty Finds at New Life Thrift

Issue #17 Novel
By:Alixie Wiley

Some time ago, I spent my day off wandering around the Glenside area in search of a mystical place called New Life Thrift.

When I found out about this supposed thrift store from a friend of mine, I was quite shocked that I didn't already know about it! Being the little wanderer that I am, I always make a point to map out every region of Philly that I possibly can in search of new hidden retail gems and hang out spots. It's a side effect of my wanderlust; a habit that I acquired after traveling to Tuscany as a freshman, where there were lots of charming medieval towns with dimly lit, winding corridors and small handmade shops along steep brick pathways and stucco walls.

Paris was similarly built for exploration; I can't count the amount of times I got lost but ended up finding places like Un Amour de Vintage, a basement thrift store run by a woman who spoke only French (to my dismay) and an authentic Japanese ramen house where I had a bowl of shoyu ramen and

pan-fried gyoza! Ah, I can remember being there like it was yesterday … but I digress!

The weather was beautiful on the day of my Glenside adventure, so much so that when I opened Google Maps on my iPhone and saw that it was nearly 2 miles from my apartment I said, "Hell, why not!" and proceeded to walk there. I totally do not regret that decision either, because after maybe 25 minutes of non-stop walking I spotted my destination – you simply can't miss the giant green and white trucks parked outside of what appears to be a tidy warehouse.

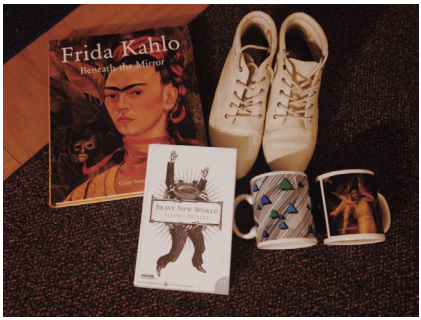
New Life Thrift's current location has been in business for around 10 years now. It's affiliated with the local New Life Presbyterian Church nearby, whose mission is "To care for the poor (Lev 19:9-10, Deut 15:7-11), the widows and orphans (Ps 68:5), the fatherless and homeless (Ps 10:14, 17-18, Ps 146:9) the strangers and aliens (Lev 29:33-34), Eph 2:17-19)." They donate much of their time and money to outreach services and charities designed to aid the less fortunate, which I think is just one of many awesome reasons to shop there or even think about volunteering during the summer.

Not only does New Life sell men's and women's clothing, shoes, and accessories, but they have a large selection of houseware and furniture that is 20% off if it's bought and taken the same day. I spotted a few Arcadia students there, one of which told me to check out their records for musical soundtracks and oldies. Needless to say, they have quite a number of CD,

DVD, VHS, and games available amid bins of old tech. Bibliophiles will also appreciate the little library alcove in the back, where I happened to find a pristine Frida Kahlo art book and a copy of Huxley's Brave New World for less than $5 total.

Price wise, everything here is dirt cheap. No seriously. I couldn't find anything that was over $20 unless it was furniture or something rare. You can walk in the door with $20 in your pocket and walk out with five or more things, which is exactly what I did! I ended up finding two cool mugs for $1 each, a pair of white boots for $6, and two books for $5 – talk about bargain finds, huh!

I must have spent an entire hour and a half digging around inside, perusing the CD racks and all the while thinking about just how great thrift stores are for communities, especially one like Glenside. Just looking around, I could see families buying discount clothing for their children and it made me think about how much thrift stores can lessen that burden of expense when it comes to child care. There were college students there buying cool trinkets and necessities for their dorms, men looking at old tech parts and albums from their angst-y adolescent years and women looking at decorative dishware for their china cabinets.



No matter where you come from, anyone can find benefits to thrifting and can drastically cut costs while still being able to find things you'll like and get much use out of for a long time. Thrifting is great for the environment and a way that you can stop yourself from paying for fast fashion that is oftentimes poor quality and disposable. Aaaaaaand, think about the people you'll be helping with your money and time if you

choose to shop, donate, and volunteer?

Being an ethical consumer is always at the top of my mind, and thrifting is an easy way to accomplish that. Check out New Life Thrift on 800 Easton Road in Glenside when you get the chance, as they're getting in new things for the spring season! If you're in Philly, it's quite easy to travel to: simply take the Lansdale/Doylestown line to Glenside and walk about 15 minutes up the road past Keswick. Arcadia University students can take the 22 bus towards Willow Grove mall.

Better still, bring a group of friends and have a thrifting party! Pack your car with things you want to donate and make sure to leave plenty of room for anything you might happen to find and fall in love with – it's bound to happen when you visit this charming warehouse of thrifty objects!

This post originally appeared on my style blog Alixe in Wonderland. Check it out for more Philly-centric style posts and skincare tips.

Breaking Barrier Behind Barbed-Wire

Issue #18 Fight or Flight

By: Tiana Grosch

Click.

Thick steel doors slide shut behind us with a sense of finality.

The feeling of complete entrapment makes my heart race. I'm fighting a panic attack, sweating bullets through my shirt.

Colorless walls remind me of high school, the last prison I entered – until now, that is. This is the real deal: Philadelphia Correctional Center, on the sidelines of the city right next to the dump (the irony isn't lost on me that Philly decides to keep all its "trash," criminals included, in one area). There are tiny slits with fogged glass for windows that let in light but don't let you see out into the world. As we walk down desolate hallways, my heart sinks. The reality of this place begins to set in. I can't imagine being a real prisoner, subjected to this jaded view of the outside every single day. I feel suffocated, cut off from the fresh air and sun that surrounded me only moments before.

My companions and I are part of the Inside-Out Prison

Exchange Program, a fairly new concept created by Lori Pompa, a teacher at Temple University. Pompa created this program to open the eyes of her students to social issues by actually immersing them inside prison. One of my first reactions when I heard of the program was to run in the other direction. Images of criminals danced in my head, angry and violent as the media had portrayed them all my life.

That first day, the closest rendition I have of prison comes from Shawshank Redemption. I doubt anything cinematic holds what I seek: the truth and realities of prison life. So when we enter the halls of prison and turn a corner only to be set face to face with a pair of prisoners, I freeze and my instincts frantically battle inside of me. The prisoners walk freely without cuffs or ankle shackles, not even escorted by a guard as you see in the movies. I feel like a cat with all its hair raised on my neck, terrified and alert as we walk down a slim corridor. The inmates keep a slow, steady pace behind us.

I desperately want to race in the other direction, but my mind tells me I need to keep going. One of my goals in college is to push my comfort zones; I think how ironic it is that I've taken it this far – to actually enter a maximum security prison, with nothing but a group of two female students and a female teacher for protection. I flashback to when I first heard of the class; the very idea terrified me but also sparked too much interest to deny.

One day I broached the subject with my mom. "I've been thinking about taking a class inside prison," I said to her.

Instead of shooting me down as expected, she encouraged me. The thought of entering prison sent a slight quivering in my nerves, darker and more twisted than a bundle of butterflies. It was the familiar twisting anxiety that tensed my body and clenched my stomach. The more I felt I couldn't do it, the more I wanted to push my boundaries. I decided

this would be the best way to discover things, by acquiring bits of knowledge from real-life experiences that may one day wind their way onto the pages of well-crafted novels. Entering prison was sure to provide me with a boatload of these tidbits; I just wasn't positive it would be worth the pilgrimage.

My mom did a good job of calming my quaking nerves. She told me, "I did a similar thing when I went to Earlham." Her relation of her experience behind prison walls in a similar course finally decided me. My initial resistance to the idea softened as she told me of her own bravery, and all the amazing memories she gained from the experience. My mom, being hard-headed and stubborn, didn't settle when the program suffered under lack of interest and decided to become its leader.

Her fondest memory was when she convinced the warden to allow her to bring the school's jazz band into prison. The warden agreed because he was under the impression it would be a calm affair. He was unprepared for the percussion part of this band, a lively addition of drummers. As my mom tells it, the band's percussion rang loudly throughout the prison, bringing a touch of cheer not normally found among the dim, bland walls. The smiles on the faces of the inmates were priceless and well worth the warden's disgruntled reaction.

With the sound of the band ringing in my imagination, I force myself to forge onward. We walk through a total of nine control-operated steel doors, becoming further engulfed inside this fortress. I feel like an animal walking to its slaughter, unable to turn back and not knowing what to expect ahead. The smell of fear hangs in the air (or is it just the foul stench of sour prison slop we're assaulted with at the end of the hallway?). I imagine all who have walked here knowing they won't be allowed to turn back. The saddest part is that some of them will meet their deaths in this place. I begin to wonder if I'll ever get

out, though I know reasonably we will only be trapped inside for about three hours.

Finally, we take an old, cramped and rickety elevator up a few floors and arrive at our destination: in the heart of max security, through another enclosed gate, we enter the community center with classrooms, a barber shop, and a computer room.

Then comes my second reflexive fight or flight moment. As we near the classroom, I see our inmate classmates already sitting there, waiting for us. I have to remind myself that we are secure, and steady myself, my body preparing to fight as I take the first steps inside. At that point, my life changes forever when I decide not to flee from this experience.

As my group was told during orientation to the program, prison is Murphy's world – anything that can go wrong, will go wrong. You need to be prepared for anything.

That's not to scare you off, however. As I entered the classroom in the middle of prison for the first time, I was met with smiles and the same mix of anxiety and fear on the faces of all my "inside" classmates. We sat together in a circle, making it easier to bond and connect. Inside-Out classes are always conducted in circles for the purpose of collaboration and bringing everyone together. The first few classes focus solely on breaking barriers between "inside" and "outside" students. These ice breakers intend to portray the humanity of the "insiders," and make everyone feel comfortable and on the same level as everyone else.

Fear actually makes a great bonding emotion. All the "outsiders" are scared to be inside prison walls for the first time, but perhaps the most stunning thing I learned is that many of the "insiders" live in constant fear. As one of my classmates revealed to me later in the course, he woke up every day scared he wouldn't make it to the end; scared another inmate would find the opportunity to let out darkness many of these

men harbored inside; scared he would face his death and never enter society as a free man again. The anger and pain lurking inside many of these men becomes difficult to keep inside and is often released in violence. Others try to keep their heads low and serve their time unnoticed.

The second week we attended class, we were told that a couple hours before, an inmate had met his death at 7:30a.m. The significance of this lay in the fact that prisoner cells don't open until 7:30 sharp, meaning the murderous inmate had been waiting. I imagined him anxiously gripping a weapon in hand, feeling sweat pool around handcrafted edges. Standing so still; picking out his target; watching, silent. Steady.

The thought of remaining locked in a building as someone's prisoner seemed enough to make even the calmest person full of agitation and aggression. But this is also the generic image of a prisoner painted by the media: animalistic and pacing behind bars.

This is the image I carry with me during my first visit. An image that broke down almost immediately as I look into the kind faces of all those who sat surrounding me. As we talk and overcome the barriers which separate us, everyone "inside" fell out of the stereotypical label of "criminal" and into the label of human.

They talked to us about their families waiting for them on the outside, their sons and daughters who hadn't seen their fathers in years because their mothers wouldn't bring them to visit. They showed us crumpled pictures of growing children, smiling despite the loss of a parent, which they kept tucked inside their shirt pockets. They talked to us about the jobs they used to have outside the walls; expressed how proud they had been to keep these jobs; lamented at the loss of their hard work, their homes taken from many of them when they entered prison. They told us how there was nothing left for them on

the outside. No way to get a job, get a scholarship to further an education, or go anywhere without someone judging them for “criminal” behavior. The oldest man in the class (in his early-late 40s) was a grandfather. He told us how he used to use his hands as a carpenter building houses, but now all he uses them for is to make road signs and prison chairs, being paid six cents an hour.

By participating in this class, these insiders had a few hours every week to speak openly and be listened to, to take part in a society that had otherwise cut them off. They all looked to the future with hope and dedication; they held the same mantra: “to create a better life for myself.” I could see the sincerity in their faces when they expressed how badly they wanted to accomplish this. Their faces lit up as they envisioned the lives they would create outside these barbed-wire topped walls.

The experience I had was really once-in-a-lifetime and I would never change it for the world. My entire outlook on life and the criminal justice system altered after the class. By battling my initial fight or flight response spurred by misconceptions, I was able to connect on a deep emotional and personal level with the inmates in my class as we discussed issues of social justice, corruption, and our ultimate goal for change.

This class gave prisoners an outlet. As one insider, K. Love, fittingly put it one day, “The best thing you can do while you’re in prison is set your mind free. That’s why we all love coming to this class, learning and talking with you. Even though our bodies are held imprisoned, they can never imprison our minds. In this room is where they are set free.”

Image credit: in sunlight via Flickr

Interview with Alan Cumming

Issue #19 Of Monster and Masks

By: Helen

Alan Cumming is an award-winning actor best known for his roles in “Spy Kids,” “Cabaret,” “X-Men,” and the TV series “The Good Wife.” He’s won many awards throughout his career, including a Tony Award for his performance as the master of ceremonies in “Cabaret.”

In addition to his impressive list of accomplishments as an actor, Cumming has also written two books, the most recent being a memoir called “Not My Father’s Son.” In it, he tells the story of the summer of 2010, when he filmed his episode for the hit show “Who Do You Think You Are?” which gives famous people the chance to uncover a piece of their genealogy that they’ve never known about. Filming the episode, Cumming learned about his maternal grandfather’s life and tragic death, which had long been a family mystery. At the same time, his own life had gone topsy-turvy when his father, who had spent Cumming’s childhood abusing him and his brother, called and told him news that shocked and upset him, setting him off on a search for the truth.

In the book, Cumming bravely discusses the abuse during his childhood and the impact it has had on his life. One of the most diffi-

cult things to do is to reveal extremely personal details about your life, especially if you know you have a large audience. Cumming unmasked himself to tell his story, and in doing so, he brought hope to all readers.

Dan DiPrinzio and Helen Armstrong sat down to ask Cumming about the experience of writing the book and the ways in which he has bravely opened his life up to the media and fans around the world.

DiPrinzio: So why write this book, I mean, some of these recollections and stories seem to be the kind that can be painful to address. Many people might keep such memories buried, so why share them with the world?

Cumming: I wrote this book for a variety of reasons but one of them was that I had this crazy series of events happen to me. It was an insane summer and I couldn't stop talking about it and I really couldn't and I wanted to expunge this story. And throughout my life I've done various things both in my writing and sort of in my acting, I've had this drive toward being more transparent and more authentic and clear. And that's been in some of the work I've done like Miracle at the Anniversary Party where I wrote [a character] based on [myself] and the other people in the film. And even in the MacBeth I did recently, there was a really interesting crossover between people being worried about the character on stage but also being worried about me as a person. And then even in the concerts I do.

So this kind of like, progression, in my work I think, to be more connected with people and to be more truthful and honest and I think when you're famous people know such a lot about you but they also know such a lot of conjecture about you and I feel that there's a big part of my life that was kind of much more prevalent and present for me because of these series of events that happened in 2010. So I just decided it was the time, if I was going

to tell a story about that summer and all the weird things that happened I needed to go back to my childhood and be very, very frank about what happened there. And I think now I've created something where I think people know me in a much more holistic way and it's only been a positive thing for me.

D: That's great. Do you think that personal discovery or really knowing one's roots is important for all of us?

C: I think there's various different modes of knowing your roots and knowing where you come from. I think I'm very interested about living here because it's hilarious like right now in this election coming with this topic of immigration being so huge and people saying such inflammatory, bigoted things about immigrants when actually this country's only just more than a couple hundred years old and we're all immigrants and immigrants built this country. So it's very short sighted I think, the notion of keeping people out is a very dangerous thought process. Because it is such a young country. I'm charmed actually by the way people always say to me "Oh you know, I'm Scottish." and I go "Oh, where are you from?" and they go "I don't know. But you know, I'm half Scottish, I'm a quarter Lebanese, I'm a bit Russian."

People are very, very conscious of wanting to understand where they belong and where their roots are and what their provenance is and I think that's a very good thing and I think as countries get older it doesn't matter so much because you'll be American first and those things will be in the dim and distant past. So I think that in this country I really understand and I'm aware of how important it is to know such a detail about where their from. But also in my case it wasn't just "I know where I'm from." This was like much more detailed behavior of my circumstances of my near relatives and I think actually sometimes stories in families, it's always good to know the truth. But you have to

be aware as I was or as I became on the road to that truth there's some very, very painful things, potentially. So it's a bit of a lottery.

D: I'm one of the people, I love the idea of the one book where like a large group of people are reading the same book and they can have a conversation about the book and it sparks conversation and it inspires thought. Do you have any feeling about how a lot of these students on campus are reading the book, it's inspiring conversation, it's sparking discussion. Is there any one or two things in particular that you would like students to take away from the book or do you have a feeling on just the fact that everyone's talking about it?

C: Obviously when you write a book and you know, it sells quite a lot, and people come up to you and say they've read it. It's a great thing because you put your story out there, you want it to be read, you want people to read it. Coming here is an unusual thing because I've never come to a place where everyone's read it and there'll be a whole tonight with a thousand and something people who've all read it. So it's actually great because you don't have to explain everything all the time. When I was doing all these book events you have to kind of assume that not many people will have read it and had just bought it that night. So it's actually great to just not have to do all that boring stuff.

But I think actually, what I found the most satisfying thing about my book is the idea that people can see someone like me, I'm successful, I've got this life this is, you know. I'm just really glad that I've been able to say to people "Hey, perhaps you're surprised by my story, but actually I'm a survivor and terrible things happened to me but I overcame them and you can overcome things in your life too." Also I don't think not everyone can do what I did, you're not going to become a famous ac-

tor necessarily just because something bad happened to you. But it is possible to overcome great despair and great pain and you really can turn things around. And so I think it's inspiring in that way. And also I would like people to take away the fact that what is really important is the idea of truth and authenticity and to not let bad things in your past cloud your vision and the idea that it's always really much better to know.

Armstrong: So you may have heard, there's a famous saying: "It's really simple to write, you just sit down at a typewriter, open a vein, and bleed." And I was thinking, that must be really difficult to write a memoir like this about something so personal. Did you feel like this was really difficult and how did you cope with that and also talking about it ad nauseum to everyone?

C: It was difficult to write, and once I made the decision I was going to do it and I was going to be as frank and go as deep as I did I stuck to my guns. And also the thing is there's certain passages that are very disturbing and were very disturbing for me to relive. I had to almost hypnotise myself to remember to sirines and how afraid I was. And so that was difficult and upsetting, but obviously that was only certain parts of the book, the whole book wasn't like that. And some of the book was very therapeutic in terms of just reliving a story and connecting the dots for myself. So I think anything you do in an artistic endeavor you've got to imagine the parts that are going to be difficult and painful and upsetting and the parts that are going to be surprisingly easy but ultimately it's going to be a catharsis and something you're proud of.

And talking about it ad nauseum, you know, I've been around the block a few times. I'm used to selling my wares in terms of doing publicity tours so it's actually good to have something to talk about that's actually substantive that I like that I'm actually engaged with instead of some dopey film and I'm

being asked questions like “If you have a superpower what would it be?” So in a way the journey of me writing the book has continued and having a discussion with other people about it.

A: So do you think that being an actor, your career has sort of prepared you writing this book and then talking about publicizing it?

C: Certainly from the publicity side, I think I’m better at that than a lot of other writings just because I’m more used to it. In terms of does being an actor prepare you for writing a book like this, I don’t know, perhaps maybe you have more of an understanding of what people think of you in the first place. You know, people know quite a lot about me so they come to this book thing “Oh I like him.” So you have to kind of like try and take that on board while you’re writing it and assume that there’s some level of knowledge about you so in a way that’s a really good thing that you can kind of like, it’s like a trampoline you can like, go to another level more quickly. So I don’t think that prepares you but it certainly is a burden to writing a book like this.

A: Another aspect about being in the public eye is that everyone knows about your sexuality and you said you never felt any shame in it and I think that it is very important for young bisexuals to have good representation in the media, sort of telling them that they’re not wrong and that it’s OK. But what was the thought process behind deciding to come out to the public and did you worry about the reaction?

C: Hopefully one day nobody will have to come out, actually I’ve been meeting some young people over the last few years and they said they never came out, they just said everyone knew and it wasn’t an issue, it wasn’t like they had to tell their parents, their parents were very well aware. And I think we live in a different time now, we’ve met sort of a cusp in sexu-

al understanding and how that's dealt with in society. But I did it because I felt that it was going to be intrusive into some of my family and the person I was seeing at the time. It was the first sort of proper boyfriend I had, that's when I kind of made a public thing about. Because it's an interesting thing, when you are bisexual and you have sex with different people over the years, it's kind of weird that "Hey, press release, had sex with a boy last night."

And also, I think coming out in public is only really relevant when there's enough people interested in you for it make a difference. So for me it was a lot to do with speculation, starting to become more famous in America and people actually asking me all the time. I was kind of a bit shaken by that, not because I was ashamed but just because I was like "Oh really, you don't want to talk about my work?" Because, you know, for all that Britain is more scandal ridden in its press. There's not such a [focus] on the whole coming out thing, I think America still got the lead in terms of the shame front in terms of sexuality. But, so I did it because I thought it would behove me actually to just say it and get it out there. And I guess maybe because I knew I was probably going to have more boyfriends than I had in the past. I actually only thought I was going to have one boyfriend at that time, but of course I was sadly mistaken.

The Power of Hands

Issue #20 Hand in Hand
By: Ashley Paskill

Big or small, hands do so much every day. They can hurt, heal, and communicate. And yet,they are the most unappreciated body part. They sit at the end of our arms and do things, but we never take a moment to realize all they do. They have the power to take life and create objects, but no one notices how much they do.

Hands can influence the world. A hand of a faithful citizen makes a vote for who will represent an entire population. A hand of a giver gives food to the hungry and money to the poor. The hands of a volunteer group build a home for the homeless or a school for those in need of education. A hand that belongs to a caregiver of a disabled veteran writes a letter to Congress to encourage them to pass legislation protecting education for veterans returning from war. The hand of a government official passes a new law to crack down on lax environmental practices by companies. The hands of an author crafts a bestselling book that sheds light on the stories of those who do not have a voice.

Hands can heal. The hands of a doctor observe an elderly man to track the patient's cancer diagnosis. A nurse distributes medication to an ill child. A hand of a close friend rubs the back of the daughter who just lost her mother to breast cancer. The hand of a musician strums a guitar to spread the joy and healing of music to the

brokenhearted. The hand of a missionary gives life-saving medicine and vaccinations to children in a developing country.

Hands can create. The hands of an artist sculpts a masterpiece out of clay. The hands of the musician pound the piano keyboard, making a new song. The hands of a team of engineers make a new bridge across a river, making commute time faster for thousands of people. The hands of employees of a publishing company puts out a one-year planner to help keep users organized, focused, and relaxed.

Hands can communicate. The hand of a journalist writes a piece about inequality in a community, sparking a change. The hands of a loved one uses sign language to interpret a speech for a young adult who was born deaf. A teenager's hand writes a letter to the principal of his school, defending his innocence in an incident he was not a part of.

Hands can kill. A hand pulls the trigger of a gun pointing at a 3-year-old girl. The hands of religious leaders, in the form of fists, beats up a gay man until he breaths his last breath. A shaky hand of a surgeon slips and makes a fatal mistake. A terrorist's hand drops the backpack at the finish line, killing 3. A hand pulls the rope, murdering the murderer.

Hands can destroy. A hand is raised to his mouth, bringing a cigarette close, and cancer closer. Her hands flail wildly in anger, breaking anything in her path. A hand tears up the homework of a daughter that is only worth an A-. Her fingers type a message of untruth about the quiet girl, causing people to bully her and unfriend her. Hands grip an axe and cut the life of the last tree in the development.

Hands can injure. Her hands grab him ever so tightly, reinforcing the bruises that were inflicted the last time she lashed out at him. Her hand grips the blade, dragging it along the tender skin of her wrist. He forces his hand, which is gripping a

toothbrush, down his throat, forcing dinner and its unnecessary calories from his body. She raises her hand and forms an “L” towards a girl she was just friends with last week.

Hands have such power over the world. They can create, destroy, and heal. No matter their size, hands do amazing things every day. They do so much but are so unappreciated. Take time each day to realize and appreciate all the things that YOUR hands can do and evaluate how you may be using them for good or evil.

Resolve to Live

Issue #21
By: Caitilin M.

Living with mental illness is a constant battle. Not a battle like the Anglo-Zanzibar War. (It lasted only 38 minutes) , but more like the Battle of Antietam or Gettysburg. Some days I'd rather stay inside and sleep instead of participate as an active member of society. Everyone has probably heard that before, but I'm pretty sure every article about mental illness starts with "the battle."

It really is a battle, at least for me. People with mental illness aren't all the same. I don't speak for all of us. There's no such thing as the model mentally ill person. It's so easy to look at one person's situation and make it universal.

I feel like a soldier in battle when I open my eyes every morning. I'm ready to get up out of bed and start my day, when all of a sudden Colonel Anxiety of the opposition comes and shoots me in the foot. I'm immobilized as the field nurses rush to mend my wounds. It's too late by that point. I'm already back asleep. The Kingdom of Anxiety rejoices their win.

People don't seem to understand that when I'm sleeping in 'til noon, it's usually not because I want to. Trying to overcome the anxiety I face every day is exhausting. If I delay my time getting up, I delay having to look at how messy my room's gotten or how many projects I have due. I like to do things one at a time, but all of my responsibilities pile up. Life isn't easily controllable. I used to tell myself that if I failed a certain test I would just kill myself, because I needed my life to be perfect. I couldn't deal with all of its imperfec-

tions. Living takes dedication.

I'm constantly anxious if I'm not taking my medication. Hell, I'm constantly anxious after I take my medication. I can't write an article unless all the circumstances are right. When someone picks at the nail polish on their fingernails I can't move. If there's a piece of paper on the ground across the room while I'm trying to read a book, I have to go pick it up before I can concentrate on the words. I can't watch TV shows unless I know everything about them. I'm always worried that someone is going to come quiz me and I won't know the answers. Life is like an exam to me; I'm terrified of failing.

I want everyone in the entire world to love me. I don't care if I like the person or not, if they don't like me it means that I need to change something. Lucifer himself could walk up to me and tell me he hates me, and I'd make a list of things I could do so that he'd change his mind.

I think it all started when I was a kid. My dad was always out late at the bar, so when he was around, I wanted to impress him. I still catch myself trying to impress him even though I only see him every few months. I love seeing my dad and telling him that I'm on the Dean's List or that I got a competitive internship position. The more impressive I can be, the better. Still, my dad doesn't care. He's never been proud. I told him that I got straight A's at my first quarter in college and he said, "Wow, they really must be lowering their standards," without a hint of sarcasm. But it's not just him anymore. I want to impress everyone.

Living up to these high standards wears me out mentally and physically.

When I used to play the Game of Life as a little girl, I'd start over when I didn't have enough money or I had too many kids in my car. Real life isn't like that. I always thought that if my GPA slipped below a 3.5 I'd be able to shoot myself in the

head and start at the beginning again.

I told myself when I was 16 that I wouldn't live long enough to graduate high school. There are so many mistakes to be made from 16 to 18 that I knew I couldn't allow myself to survive. But then I realized that if I kept thinking that way, I wouldn't live past high school. I had to tell myself that I was going to live if I wanted to graduate high school.

When I wake up sometimes the first thought in my mind is, "I want to die." It's automatic. Sometimes I say it out loud; sometimes it's a thought that repeats in my head as I roll out of bed at 9:50 for my 10:00 philosophy class. Wanting to die doesn't necessarily mean wanting to take a bullet to your head. When I feel like I want to die, I just want to stop existing.

There was this quote in the movie Wall-E that really stuck with me. The captain of the ship said, "I don't wanna survive, I wanna live!" There's a difference. Some days I'm just surviving. I can stare at a computer screen for hours looking at articles about the Kardashians. Is that living?

There's so much pressure to do things that sometimes I do nothing. So when I say I want to die, I mean I want to sit in bed looking at cat videos until my entire life passes me by. If I don't participate in life, I can't hurt anyone. I can't fail a test if I don't take it. I can't be declined a job offer if I don't apply to it. It's safe in my bed all alone.

These days when I wake up I say, "I want to die, but I'm not going to do that. I'm going to live." My therapist told me to say that, and at first I thought it was total bullshit. Now after doing this for about three months, I've realized that it actually helps. I've started telling myself positive things whenever I want to say something negative.

Some days I look in the mirror I see my face covered in acne and I think, "I'm really ugly." Now I tell myself, "I

might feel ugly today, but that's not really true." Even if I don't always believe it in the moment, it helps. I'll sleep in too late and I wake up and I think, "Wow I hate myself." Usually I'd leave it at that, but now I say, "I might hate myself, but I'm working on loving myself." Loving yourself isn't easy, but I try to make it into a full time job. If I decide to just leave it at, "I hate myself," my entire day is ruined. I actively choose to love myself.

I'm a very type-A person, so people don't usually realize that I'm struggling. I run myself to the edge every month. I'm up almost every night doing my homework 'til 4 in the morning because my schedule is so packed. It's so easy to get caught up in all the small things I do wrong. I've always loved performance reviews because I get to see what exactly my boss thinks of me. The performance review is in the back of my head regardless of what I'm doing. My GPA is emblazoned in the back of my mind every time I open a word document to write a paper. I'm pretty sure I'd have a meltdown if I got any grade below a B. I already have a meltdown when I get a B.

So when I'm performing well it's hard for people to tell that I want to die.

If I really wanted to die I'd just do it already

That's the other thing. It's almost a challenge. You say you want to die and the next thing out of a person's mouth is, "If you wanted to die you would have killed yourself".

The moment someone tells me that I'm thinking of ways I can actually kill myself to prove to them how much I'm suffering.

When you're having suicidal thoughts it's not always about sobbing every second of the day. It's just this little inkling of a thought in the back of your mind as you're carrying out your day-to-day activities.

I used to think about that a lot, but now I don't, because it's not about what people

see. If people want to believe that, fine. I'm going to actively try to get rid of the thoughts whether anyone believes they're there or not.

It's not like I want to have these thoughts, it just feels shitty when people try to tell me what I'm feeling. So many times I've put my self worth on what other people think. If someone thinks I'm a bad person, I am a bad person. There's not an in-between for me. I'm trying to figure out how I can love myself if other people don't love me.

When I was around four, I spent the afternoon sobbing because my mom said the hands I drew on people were too big.

I used to date any person who thought I was attractive. I can make myself love anyone for any number of reasons. Now I think I was probably just covering up for how much I hated myself. If I could pour all my attention into loving someone else, I wouldn't have to confront how much I hated myself.I feel so much for everyone, but I don't feel enough for myself. I need to be in a relationship with myself.

I think a good start would be celebrating my small victories. So maybe I didn't return that phone call to my doctor, but I got up today. I got dressed. I ate food. To some people these don't seem like victories, but there are some days I sleep in until 3 in the afternoon and don't eat 'til 7 at night. Waking up and eating are victories for me.

I'm realizing that every single day I do at least one thing right. Today I made someone smile. I laughed. I read a book. I got paperwork signed (that one deserves a celebration itself). I did something. And so did you.

You read this article. You combed your hair. You brushed your teeth. You got out of bed and said yes to life for this one day. Even if you didn't do those things, at the very least you woke up (unless you're reading this article in your dream, in which case, you learned how

to get wifi in your dreams. I'm jealous, really).

I'm not resigning myself to small victories. I want to have days where I do more. But I can't do that if I tell myself I'm worthless every day. So maybe I can't do the things other people do yet. I'm not going to publish a novel this year. I'm not going to run a marathon. I won't travel the world.But I'll make my dog happy. I'll pass my sophomore year of college. I'll live.

Every New Years that's my resolution; I resolve to live.

And you should too.

Imago Dei

Issue #22 Your ID
By: Sarah A.

Imago Dei!

Watch as students from different social and cultural backgrounds define what the phrase means for them!

Note from the Editor: This is a video. To view, download the Artivive app and scan the picture above!

6 Going on 16

Issue #23 Are You Kidding Me? By: Lana

“Lana, I can’t even read this. Why didn’t you get me something cool?”

So says Matteo as he judges my choice of souvenir for him, a cute Arabic book that I bought while I was in Oman for spring break. Sure, he can’t understand the language, but the idea is cool. He wouldn’t be interested in reading such a basic turtle book, anyway. How ungrateful was this reaction? I mean, honestly. Fake a smile, boy.

King of the house, dad’s only son. Regardless of his attitude, my brother is one of my favorite little human beings on Earth. I adore him and I lavish attention on him as if he were my own son. Maybe it’s the fact that he’s surprisingly mature for a 6-year-old (are you 6 or 16?), or our age gap (12 years, woah mom & dad), or the simple fact that he’s not another sister (I have 2), but Matteo is a national treasure. Even though he’s already a butt-obsessed weirdo, he’s my weirdo.

When I asked him if I could interview him—scratch that, told him I was going to interview him—I was met with some resistance, naturally. Why waste his time talking to me for extended periods of time when instead, he can play on Minecraft for hours on end?

Eventually, I ~~forced~~ convinced Matteo to sit down and talk to me. The results were… Inconclusive? Was there a point to the interview? (Did we even know

what we were researching?) To say the least…

Disclaimer: All of the following material is completely unscripted, so bear with me, please.

Matteo, we're going to talk about you and your favorite things for awhile, okay?

I am my favorite thing.

…Wow. From the mouths of babes. Okay. Besides that.

What does that mean?

It means that little kids, like you, are super honest.

Are big kids liars?

Sometimes.

Are you a liar?

…Sometimes.

Mom says not to lie, but I took $2 out of her bag yesterday.

Matteo!

What?!

*some confusing discussion and topic changes later

Alright, so tell me about your favorite thing to do.

Go on the computer, couldn't you guess that?

I probably could've. What do you like to do on the computer?

Uh, watch videos and play Roblox.

Is that it?

*with an eyeroll

Noooo. I like to search up stuff, like games, you know, whatever.

What other kinds of stuff do you like to search up?

Games, and stuff.

Yes… And what else?

Umm… That's pretty much it. I like to be on the computer.

I see. So… Something else,

then. What do you think of this picture of yourself?

*pauses, looks at my screen

Snazzy.

Self-confidence goals. Is there anything you wanna say about yourself?

Hmm, no. I don't really know much.

You know a lot. I want you to just talk. Talk about stuff.

I don't really know much. My one and only dream is to be a Youtuber. My… Friends, I don't really know. We just talk, and stuff.

Do you have any funny stories about you and your friends?

I mean, so I was running at school, and I started to trip, and I said, "Mamma mia!" And then I fell. And I got this big scrape.

*he shows me his injury

That looks like it hurt!

Yeah, it did hurt. But now it doesn't hurt because there's no more blood. But if I push on it, then it does kinda hurt.

*he gets up and watches me type and laughs when he recognizes what I'm typing

Is it cool to see what you're saying down on paper?

Yeah. Yeah, I like it.

Well, what do you want to talk about?

I wanna talk about… Like, Five Nights at Freddy's 4* things.

*in case you don't know, Five Nights at Freddy's 4 is just a creepy game.

Okay, talk.

I got jump-scared by Night-mare Bonnie*. Go, look him up.

Ew, what the heck, Matte*?! That's so creepy!

I know it's creepy! That's why

I got scared!

*sisterly nickname, pronounced “Mah-tay”

Then why do you play it?

Because it’s fun. And, well, I have to save it for Halloween. Like, aaahh!

You play it even though it’s scary.

Yeah. No. The jump-scare—okay. *he pulls a chair closer

They all show up behind different doors, and, yeah. It’s pretty scary. But then after you complete the night, you go to plush traps, it’s a fun thing to play. To play it, you have 70 seconds to flash the flashlight at him. If you don’t, he jump-scares you.

Matteo, I’m sorry baby, I literally have no idea what most of this means.

Um, you can get free credit for the night if you win.

Still no idea. Can we talk about Minecraft?

Sure. It’s cool, the black words are you talking and the others are me.

Yep.

You wrote a lot about me.

Yep. Because you’re my favorite boy.

Okay, so Minecraft.

Wait, Matte, this is pretty long, do you think we should end it?

No.

What—

Wait until we talk about Minecraft.

Okay. Go on, little king.

In Minecraft, I built Five Nights at Freddy’s 4. It’s pretty decent, but I need to finish it, a little bit. Till I make the walls and the ceiling.

Did you do it all yourself?

Yes, with no help. I made the bedroom, and the whole hall, I just need to do the ceilings,

right here, and the floor. *he's demonstrating with his hands

So no help from any Youtubers?

Nope. No help.

…Well, I did get some help. From Fed X Gaming.

I don't know what that is.

He's my new fave Youtuber.

He's your new favorite? What happened to LD-ShadowLady?

<— Oh, her? I abandoned her.

Why? You had a crush on her.

No I don't.

Whatever you sayyyy.

*he's smiling and hiding his face

Matteo, we said a lot. We should end it, so is there anything you wanna say?

Mmm, yeah. Uh, no. Matteo, out of the house! *he throws the peace sign and goes up to bed

"The Riddle of the Model" and Graduation

Issue #24 Countdown
By: Rachel Bellwoar

Graduation is weird. I think it's supposed to be this big, grandiose, sad, amazing, gratifying, powerful, "all of the feels" event, but mostly, it's weird.

Maybe it still hasn't sunken in yet that I'm done my undergrad career. I should probably preface this article by noting that, excluding birthdays, I am bad at milestones. Riding a two-wheeler bike for the first time was a pretty big deal. But my high school graduation ceremony? Hated. College acceptance letters? As much as I loved and wanted to go to Arcadia University, there was no jumping up and down. Getting my driver's license and enduring the car search that would never end? Ugh.

Which might make it seem like I'm unappreciative of the various opportunities I've had. That's not my intention. I know I've been extremely lucky and privileged. I have had a fantastic education. It's the standardized approach to meeting these milestones that's always rubbed me the wrong way. Traditions are great, and there is nothing wrong with people having rituals for commemorating the big events in their lives. What's wrong is when society expects you to adhere to these rituals because "that's what people do;" because it's popular. It's popular, for example, for people to throw parties to commemorate their hard-worked for achievements. That doesn't mean you should feel obligated to throw one just because

people expect you to. Similarly, while there is nothing wrong with commencement being associated with feelings of excitement and pride, if you're not quite at those emotions yet, that's ok, too. Graduation is a big deal but it also means different things to different people. Thus. while on paper, my mom surprising me with a DVD from Amazon should be less exciting than my college diploma arriving in the mail, the reality is season 1 of The 100 wins every time. That's ok. Graduation doesn't have to come one-size fits all.

It also doesn't have to come in the shape of an official graduation ceremony. The reason my diploma is being delivered via postal service is I've decided to skip my undergraduate commencement this year. It's a bit of a controversial decision. The truth, though, is I could basically do anything else that day — go to the movies, have a nice lunch, sit at home with my TV shows in my fancy dress, and it would mean more to me than standing in the sun in an unflattering hat (and I love hats). That's who I am. And I kinda like that 'weird,' strange person.

Graduation isn't all meaningless, either. It means I'm never going to have another course with some of the profoundly awesome professors I've met during my semesters here. It means I won't be seeing a lot of familiar faces. In almost every class I've taken over the years there's been a handful of people I thought would have been cool to get to know better, who I've said, "Hi!" to once, or that I've spoken with occasionally. I'm really bad at starting conversations, so saying "you know who you are" isn't guaranteed to get me any recognition. I'm sorry for that. You all were really nice.

Graduation also means facing the big question of, "What in the world is going to happen next?" I've never been one to snub the chance for some free time, but now with the career search in full swing, having a cleared up calendar is going to be bittersweet. I'm optimistic about

what future employment could bring. The process of looking, however, is a black hole.

And finally, graduation means Sing Street.

Seeing the world through pop culture glasses has been my superpower since I decided the Powerpuff Girls and Pikachu occupied the same universe and could sit next to me on the school bus. I truly believe there's nothing that can't be enhanced, clarified, or made better through a TV or film reference, and with graduation, Sing Street, the recent joyful release about boy meets girl and asks her if she'd like to be the model in the band he hasn't got yet, fits the bill perfectly. I've been listening to the film's soundtrack of 80's hits and catchy originals to keep pumped during finals week and, as usually comes from listening to a CD nonstop, you start to catch more and more of the lyrics.

"Cos' what if everything's beautiful fiction / And this reality's just pretend?"

This question haunts English majors. It nags graduates. But it gets one thing right: Fiction is beautiful. It's also, funnily enough, made by humans. Everywhere in the world someone's reality is creating and talking about this beautiful stuff we call art for a living. It's the kind of reality I hope to share one day.

After all,

"This is your life / You can be anything / You gotta learn to rock and roll it / You gotta put the pedal down / And Drive It Like You Stole It!"

Drive it like you stole it, class of 2016. Sing Street doesn't lie.

The Media's Obsession With Fear Mongering

Issue #25 Literally Obsessed
By: Kirby Sibiski

When was the last time you watched the news and didn't feel sad or scared? The majority of the mainstream news is constantly going on about death, terrorism, and hate. It appears that the mainstream news has an obsession with fear mongering. Fear mongering, the use of scare tactics to influence the behavior of people, has run rampant in our society, and it has left those who have noticed to ask why. The answer, surprisingly, is not that complicated, but to find the answer we must first look at the goal of any society.

The goal of any society is to create ideal conditions for all of its population. This utopian dream, as it appears to me, can never come fruition, however. This is due to the fact that everyone's ideal conditions depend upon how they see the world, their perspective. For example, for the very rich, we may already be living in what they would consider to be a utopia. They have all the money and resources that they could ever want, meaning they have power, and if there is anything I have learned from George Orwell's 1984, it is

that “power is not a means; it is an end.”

So what does this have to do with fear mongering? Well, those with power can have a very large influence on the media. Since those with power control most of the things we see in the news, they have the ability to spread whatever information they want, regardless of how true that information is. In the case of the mainstream news, those in power decide to use scare tactics, using fear as a tool to get us to agree with what they want to do. When we agree with what the powerful, or ruling class, want to do, it reinforces the power that the ruling class has over us.

Possibly the most notorious example of the media’s use of fear mongering occurred in the build up to the United States entering the war in Iraq in 2003. In his article “Media’s Failure on Iraq Still Stings”, Howard Kurtz writes, “From August 2002 through the March 19, 2003, launch of the war, I found more than 140 front-page stories that focused heavily on administration rhetoric against Iraq: ‘Cheney Says Iraqi Strike Is Justified’; ‘War Cabinet Argues for Iraq Attack’; ‘Bush Tells United Nations It Must Stand Up to Hussein or U.S. Will’; ‘Bush Cites Urgent Iraqi Threat’; ‘Bush Tells Troops: Prepare for War.’ By contrast, pieces questioning the evidence or rationale for war were frequently buried, minimized or spiked.”

This is a perfect example of members of the ruling class, in this case the Bush-Cheney administration, using the media as an apparatus through which to spread fear in order to get people to do what they want. This obviously isn’t the only example of the use of fear mongering in the media. Another great example comes from the 2016 election cycle, especially with Donald Trump. Perhaps Trump’s most infamous use of fear mongering was directed at Mexicans, when he said, “They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs.

They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people." This type of rhetoric was designed to get people to fear Mexicans. Trump realized that he could use his power, his time on TV and in the media, to spread this fear, and if people fear Mexicans, they will support his policy of building a wall on the border.

So now that we can see how fear mongering works and why it's used, we must ask ourselves another important question: why does it matter whether or not those with power use fear tactics in the media?

As I discussed earlier, the goal of any society is to create ideal conditions for the entirety of its population. While we may not be able to create "ideal" conditions for everyone, we can certainly create fair and good conditions for the entire population. Fear mongering discourages the creation of these conditions through distraction. By this I mean to say that instead of focusing on issues which could help to create a better society for everyone, we are too focused on the things that we fear. Since one would expect the recent presidential debates to be a reflection of the most popular topics discussed regarding the United States, we will look to these debates as an indicator as what is being discussed in the mainstream media. For example, Clinton has brought up the issue of Trump having access to nuclear codes multiple times in an attempt to scare voters into voting for her.

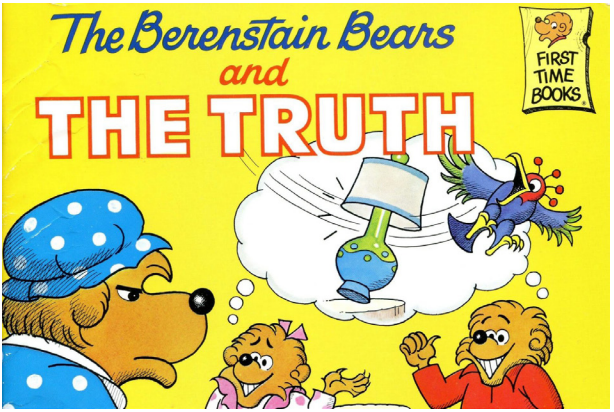
The debates have featured a lot of attacks on each candidate's personal character, each of them trying to discredit the "fitness" of the other. This has let many issues fall at the wayside, including topics such as education, which, in my opinion, is one of the most important topics to be discussed, as education could actually help to create a better society for everyone, except for ruling class.

According to the article "The U.S. Literacy Rate Hasn't

Changed in 10 Years" from the The Huffington Post, a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Institute of Literacy found that 14% of the U.S. population cannot read, 21% of adults read below a fifth grade level, and 19% of high school graduates cannot read. This issue has not been brought up in the debates once, and I have never heard it mentioned anywhere within the mainstream media, despite the fact that this appears to be a pretty large problem, one that will certainly deter our country from being able to create fair and good conditions for everyone.

The fact of the matter is, however, that the ruling class largely determines what is shown and discussed in the media, and a 100% literacy rate does nothing to cement their status as the ruling class. In fact, if anything, it is likely in the interest of the ruling class that less people are literate, because it allows them to be manipulated much easier, and if large groups of people can be easily manipulated, it becomes easier for the ruling class to cement their social status. The more people that become educated, the more we will see a change in social structures which is exactly what the ruling class would like to prevent.

While all of this may sound pretty depressing, and it may seem as though the odds of creating fair and good conditions for our entire population are insurmountable, we should not give up hope. Instead, we should voice our opinions, so long as they are rational and well thought-out, through platforms other than the mainstream media. In the digital age, we have a lot of resources which we can use in order to stand up to the ruling class and the mainstream media. Through these resources, persistence, and maybe even a little luck, perhaps one day we will be able to have rational discussions not based on fear and the desires of the ruling class but based on logic and the desires of our population as a whole.



The Impawsible Berenstain Bears

Issue #26 The Forgotten Issue
By: Austin

There are some childhood relics that we simply can't let go of. Call it misplaced nostalgia, but certain aspects of our young lives shouldn't be forgotten and left to crumble in the sands of time. After all, who could forget the first seasons of Pokémon and how that dictated the social hierarchy of our middle-school lives? And who can't help but smile when they remember the fond times when they actually made good episodes of Spongebob? And of course, who can ever forget the lovable, relatable family that were the Beren….stain Bears.

I'm sure most of us have heard of that Berenstain Bears rumor; but to those who aren't aware, there's been some mass controversy regarding the namesake of those funny little bears. Specifically, a good majority of people remember the spelling to be "Berenstein", as opposed to "Berenstain". Crazy, I know, and probably

even a bit miniscule were it not for the fact that this mass memory tampering has become a worldwide phenomenon.

Go right ahead and ask a friend; they'll swear on their life that it's "Stein" and not "Stain". But going through the original 1962 publications of the book, one can clearly see that it's been spelled "Stain" all this time. So then, were we all just too dumb to read? If that's the case, those books sure did a lousy job of helping us learn morals and whatnot.

According to Stan Berenstain's son, the name has always been said incorrectly, even in his childhood, thanks in part to a know-it-all teacher who insisted the spelling was "Stein". It probably doesn't help that the cartoon produced in the 80's practically pronounced the name "Stein" on a regular basis. Probably cause they thought they knew how to spell too. Seriously, did these books teach anyone how to read?

There have been some other theories on why everyone thinks it's "Stein", the most plausible being a Jewish heritage invoked by both Stan and Jan Berenstain respectively. The story goes that they decided to change the name from "Stein" to "Stain" due to the unfavorable view on Jewish people during the time-frame in which the books were initially published. And that may very well hold water…if it weren't for the fact that the books repeatedly preach Christian morals and views.

While it's true that Stan was indeed Jewish, his wife was Episcopalian and pushed for a more Christian approach regarding the books and their teachings. So there goes that reasoning out the window, forever to be forgotten like the many who forgot the Berenstain spelling. Of course, there is one more theory circulating out there that could explain all this; the ever popular Mandela Effect.

In short, the Mandela Effect refers to the idea that false memories, such as our elusive "Stein" or "Stain"

debacle, are in fact simply glimpses into parallel worlds and alternative timelines. The theory was coined by Fiona Broome who noticed that a lot of people thought Nelson Mandela had died in prison way back in the 80's. Whether that's an issue of the Mandela Effect at work or just people not reading the newspapers again is up to discuss for another time.

Being based on quantum mechanics and considering the strange nature of our world, it's not too much of a stretch to put your money on the Mandela Effect. At some point, a good portion of individuals indirectly crossed over into another universe, this universe, in which the spelling was "Stain" and not "Stein". The "Stein" universe is in fact the original universe these individuals traversed from and are now away from home.

Crazy? Possibly. A bit comical? Oh yes. The best way to describe the Berenstain Bears name fad going around? Most likely because so far, no one has come forth with an actual theory as to why we all just happened to forget the spelling of our wonderful, colorful bear family. And truth be told, we might never know why our memories have been displaced from time. All we can do is hope and pray that maybe, just maybe, we can also forget the horrible, horrible new seasons of Spongebob. Maybe.

We (almost) Ended Our Lives

Issue #27 End of the Line

By: Sarah A

TW: Depression, Suicide, Self Harm, Drug Use

Depression, substance abuse, self-harm, and thoughts of suicide are all very difficult things to talk about, let alone struggle with. The pain is often too great to communicate, and the loneliness too real. If you suffer from any of these illnesses or feel trapped by your own thoughts, I just want you to know that you are not in fact alone. You are extremely and unfathomably loved. Below are a series of testimonies shared by friends, friends of friends, and even Twitter users who once struggled with these things so bad that they almost ended their own lives. I pray this would be an encouragement to you to push on, for there is hope and there is love.

Creighton: A Bad Drug Trip

As the summer began I started to do drugs with my cousin. This grew me closer to her – she just seemed so relatable. She seemed to be such a positive and sweet person at first. That summer she got “jumped” by her ex. As I was going to fight him for her, they pulled a gun on me and I said, ‘shoot me B.’ I didn’t know who this was but I knew it wasn’t me talking. I was so consumed by evil then but didn’t want to believe it. One day my cousin suggested tripping on acid together because it “opens doors in your mind.” It is a drug that, in my eyes is the

devil's vision. It's all too real and scary but I didn't know that until I was in it. I didn't care to do the drug but I said 'sure,' because I'd do anything to please my family. I put the tab in my mouth and instantly I felt cold.

What did I do?

As the drug settled in, I began to realize this was going to end badly. I was going to have a "bad trip." She took me outside because I was overheated and was breathing incorrectly. She said I could potentially die. It was 10 o'clock at night. I was so scared and I started seeing things. She began to say she was melting into the earth and she ran up to this dark forest and began to hug a tree. I ran away from her to what seemed like endless darkness. I couldn't escape and then I looked back at her and she disappeared as if a corner closed up. I didn't see anything but darkness around me and a light shining on me. I realized I was in hell and thought I was dead already but then she called my name and ran over to me and grabbed my hand. The corner re-opened. I was so scared. I knew this was hell and I was sure I was dead. By now I was seriously on the verge of suicide.

My heart was beating twice as fast and I couldn't breathe. My body felt inflamed. I left the house at about 2 o'clock wearing nothing but socks and shorts. As we walked past the block where my cousin was jumped, she snapped her head at me, her hair went black, face went white and lips bright red. I looked up at God and I kept saying 'let's go to wonderland,' as in heaven, and she said, 'no, come to the darkness with me.' My skin started to prickle and I felt something pulling on my face. I cried out to God while holding her hand as hard as I could. I kept saying, 'Cousin you're so dark. Cousin, why are you so dark?"

We continued walking and when we hit that block again, the sky grew two times darker and a church bell went off. I began to think I was dead

and the only way to prove it was to grab a knife and stab myself. I thought death was my only way out but I knew God was telling me to hold on, telling me to look up and trust Him that I would see a way out. I was in that acid trip for 48 hours and God was there every step of the way. I heard the devil's whispers telling me to come downstairs and to draw near to him but I didn't. I trusted God and once I was out of the trip I went home and I repented to my mom and God. I began reading the Bible daily and prayed and cried. Days later I woke up new – reborn. I knew the person I was no longer me. That person was dead and I will never forget that.

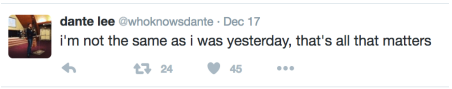
dante lee Retweeted
jonah @jonnnaahhh · Dec 17
held a knife to my chest for an hour..literally felt a hand grab my wrist and pull away..and Jesus told me "I love you my son"
dante lee @whoknowsdante
post your testimony under this tweet, i love seeing how far God has brought us
3
26
78

Maria: Drowning Out the Hurt

So everything that I have overcome has only been through the saving power and grace of Jesus Christ. My life is a testament to His glory and supreme authority. As a child I immigrated to the United States from Chile, growing up in a multicultural house. I was sexually molested by one of my brothers when I was really young and it was a vivid memory that traumatized me long into my teen years. I had no hope and being in school only made matters worse. I was being bullied for the way that I looked and racially targeted because I was different than all of my classmates. A crippling anxiety began to develop in me and I would often have panic attacks and refuse to attend school and even refuse to even leave the house. I would have nightmares and night terrors – there seemed to be no end to my misery.

After years of abuse, I learned that as long as I went along with the jokes and played it off as a "happy-go-lucky" person, everything would be okay. I fell into a deep depression and I began to abuse alcohol and drugs

to drown out the sorrow I felt and the discontent I had with myself. I hated who I was, how I looked and this went on for years. I was seeing a counselor and taking medication, but nothing ended the pain and despair I felt. I was abusing prescription drugs as well, and I was falling deeper and deeper into toxic habits. I was engaging in acts of promiscuity and even violence towards myself.



Finally one day, right before the start of my junior year in high school, I was at the end of my strength. I felt as if no one could love me and I couldn't even forgive myself for the things that happened to me. In the midst of drinking and partying, I passed out and woke up in the middle of the night, alone. No one was there for me and I cried out to God, blaming Him for the turn my life had made. I was angry and in the midst of my screaming, I began to cry, overwhelmed with a feeling of helplessness. I wanted nothing but to end my life. Suddenly, I grew quiet as I heard the Lord say, "I love you, you have always been mine and nothing will ever change that. I accept you as you are, dirty, broken, worn, and tired, but I forgive you and I love you, I love you, I love you". I knew God had spoken to me and for the first time in my life I accepted and received His love.

From that day I still struggled to accept His love as a free gift, but I knew who I belonged to and I was found in His love. Today I stand a transformed, set free, and renewed person. I have forgiven myself, those who hurt me, and this past year I have been completely healed of my anxiety and depression. I am in school to become a missionary and my desire is to disciple people to understand their divine purpose and identity in Him! The Lord is my everything and I want nothing but to serve Him and give Him my all for His glory.

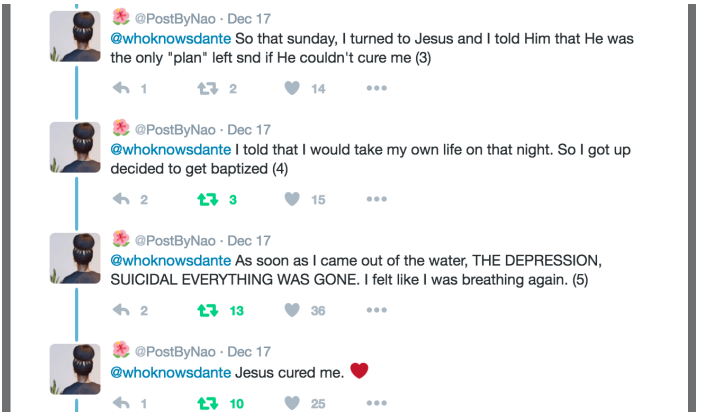
Rachel: Pills, Pills,

Pills

Overwhelmed with unmanaged depression, I sat on my bed, as I had several times that fall semester (2015), fingering the pills in my hand. The ache and emptiness in my heart screamed at me to take them all at once. The logical reasoning in my head differed slightly but had grown softer as the days and difficult situations passed. I didn't want to keep living in the dark places of my head, feeling sad and confused, and faking the smiles and laughs anymore. At the time, I wasn't exactly sure of what was keeping me here on this earth. I know now, however, that it was my Savior, God, who promised to never leave me even when I believed He wasn't there.

I would go to church still and get glimpses of peace, and those refreshers would be just enough to keep going for the next week. I really don't know why I went. I thought I hated God for forgetting about me and leaving me alone. But he hadn't; quite the opposite in fact. My family visited as much as possible, too, and they refreshed me as well, with physical sustenance like food and hugs and verbal affirmation. I know now God was telling them to come.

He showed me the blessings in my life. I viewed them as burdens at the time, burdens to "stick around" for. But as a healthier and stronger person now, I know they're blessings. He reminded


@PostByNao · Dec 17
@whoknowsdante So that sunday, I turned to Jesus and I told Him that He was the only "plan" left snd if He couldn't cure me (3)
1 2 14
@PostByNao · Dec 17
@whoknowsdante I told that I would take my own life on that night. So I got up decided to get baptized (4)
2 3 15
@PostByNao · Dec 17
@whoknowsdante As soon as I came out of the water, THE DEPRESSION, SUICIDAL EVERYTHING WAS GONE. I felt like I was breathing again. (5)
2 13 36
@PostByNao · Dec 17
@whoknowsdante Jesus cured me.
1 10 25

me that I have a wonderful family who loves me and would be at a loss without me. He showed me what beautiful friends I have, ones that weren't ashamed of me or my illness and were and always are by my side. He let me remember that I was in a dorm room at a school where I was working hard for a degree that could someday change the world.

The hurt I felt is still there sometimes, but, even with the hurt, I know have a unique and truly beautiful God who loves me. I now see that an All-Mighty and All-Powerful deity on high cared to know me personally, and heal me mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. I'm okay now. He helped the doctors and my counselors, too. I believe He won't ever let me go, even when the fog comes back every now and again. He has impressed that too deeply on my heart for me to ever forget.

Kerris: A Call to "Breathe"

6th grade defined me in ways I had never known

Breathe

April 20, 2010 at 2:46am

I'm so poised so bitterly poised to end this fight
Fortifying myself in that welcoming smile that lies to many
Deceive the hearer for he has no pity
Drowning in sleepless nights
Floating to just breathe but only drown the next day
Numb to the world for hope is a nursery rhyme

The Room holds its breath all is deathly quiet
The blade holds the door open to conclusion
Feel what I feel world
Take this burden and remember what you forgot
For there is no more time to accept what is no longer living
The End would have been a deep cut

My Ear still rings from the voice
The voice that calms all things
The voice that conquers death
The voice that offered me acceptance
The voice that offered me deliverance

"Everything is going to be all right… Everything"
For I am now still because you are god
I laid in pieces blind to my maker
Waiting for my Lord to open my eyes to make me whole
Fill my world lead me to things unseen
You wipe away the tears that the world missed
Because you breathe me to life

By: Kerris Dawson Ackley
"Breathe" Copyright 2009 ®

before. I thought I was defined by a world who ignored me and turned its back on me. This is when I turned to suicide to end it all. But then I discovered my identity as a child of the one true king. If you've made it this far, bless you! There is no darkness that the light cannot overcome. Remember this!

If you have a testimony of your own, please feel free to share it in the comments section below so that all who read can rejoice in hope with you! We are thankful for your life and excited to see how your presence will bless the earth!

Keep fighting the good fight.

New School, New Place

Issue #28 Tabula Rosa
By: Julia

I've moved around a large majority of my life; my dad was part of the Navy, so we were constantly packing up and heading to new places. I was born in Texas, but after about two years we moved to South Carolina. After another year, we moved to Japan, where we lived on a military base for three months. For all these reasons, I was homeschooled for my preschool years. But I had fun and enjoyed each new place.

Now, before I started kindergarten, we moved from Japan to New Orleans, Louisiana. We lived a couple blocks from one of my favorite Uncles and from my school as well. I walked there each morning with my mum, and I made friends easily. We always played around with our tri-fold napping mats, and we played tag with some of the big kids on the black top. I absolutely loved it!

And then my parents told me and my two younger siblings that we'd be moving to Alabama. I was devastated, but that didn't bother my parents a single bit. The beginning

of that summer, we packed up all the boxes of our things and made the drive out to our new home in Birmingham, Alabama. I made new friends there just as easily, and I loved our neighbors. At the end of my second grade year, my parents told us (and our two year old brother) that we were moving again.

So, I began my third grade school year in our new home in Healdsburg, California. It was a little harder to make friendships that time, because third grade is around the time that most people have already kind of made friends. But I eventually found a nice group of people; and we've lived there ever since, so apart from high school, there weren't any major changes that required to really make new friends. Except for spending my entire Junior year of high school in Germany.

With all that moving around, college wasn't really that big of a change for me. People are always so surprised that I chose to move all the way from California to Pennsylvania for a university, but moving has already really defined who I am. I love learning to adapt to new places, love meeting new people, and love to embrace all the change that the whole experience comes along with.

That being said, of course I miss my family and friends, but because they are that — my friends and family — I know that they'll always be there for me when I go back home, or when I'm super down and need someone to talk to about things that are really upsetting me.

I know that there are many people who feel uncomfortable in such a new environment. In many cases, people are no longer with their friends they've known for as long as they can remember. They may no longer be with their parents, and feel like they are lacking support they no longer thought they truly needed or still wanted. I myself even find myself feeling homesick or lonely or anxious at times.

My advice for anyone feel-

ing this way — as someone who has lots of first-hand experience in this department — is to try first to figure out the things that make you happy on your own. Find a hobby, for example that you truly enjoy; reading, writing, drawing, writing music! That way, you have something to do that you love whenever you feel lonely at all. Exploring the area is also a great way to lessen those feelings. It allows you to really explore the place you'll be spending a large amount of your time in.

Another major thing is to get out of your comfort zone. In some cases, this is much easier said than done. However, you can't really get to know people if you never put yourself out there to meet anyone. It might seem a little frightening, but chances are the person is feeling the same as you; they want to get to know more people, but they're just a bit to anxious to make that first conversation. Be that person!

Other than that, my last bit of advice is to just remember that even though you may be a ways from home at your new college campus, you always have friends and family back home who love you and will be there to cheer you up whenever you need it. The advantages of modern-age technology are at your fingertips so that they are never more than a call, text, or facetime away!

Enjoy your new experiences, embrace them, and feel free to share any additional advice in the comment section.

Why Have We Forgotten About the B in LGBTQ

Issue #29 Out of this World
By: Jessica

Around my freshman year of college, I made a conscious decision that I was going to be completely honest about my sexuality to anyone and everyone who asked. From a young age, I always knew that I wasn't exactly straight, but I wasn't exactly gay either. It wasn't until the end of junior high that I even learned that there was a term for it: bisexuality.

Still, I never told anyone until last year that I was attracted to both genders because it was just easier to tell them that I was straight. I knew that there was a lot of stigma surrounding bisexuality and I was technically only half lying. What was so bad about that? Why do they even need to know my business anyways? They probably wouldn't even understand. As I've grown older, I've realized just how contorted my thinking was back then. I shouldn't have to dumb down or lie about who I am to appease others. Bisexuality isn't a complicated term. It means what it means.

According to research done by Gallup in 2016, it is estimated that around 4.1% of adults in the United States identify on the LGBTQ scale. In early January of 2016, The National Health Statistic Reports claimed that only two-percent of males identified as bisexual while five-and-a-half percent of women identified as bisexual based off the records from the

2011-2013 National Survey of Family Growth. Despite such a large number of people identifying as bisexual, there is still a lot of stigmatization and alienation among bisexuals in society today.

From the various movies, television shows, and books that I have read or seen, the characters are always either gay or straight: there's rarely ever any representation of what's in between. Even when there are portrayals of bisexual characters, they are often written as stereotypes. For example, arguably one of the biggest media representation of bisexuality as of today is Piper Chapman of Orange is the New Black. Although the show uses its platform to normalize homosexuality and depict all members of the LGBTQ community, the writers of the show are unfortunately lacking the skills to write an accurate bisexual character.

Despite the fact that one of the main characters is bisexual, the word "bi" is only mentioned once in the first two seasons, twenty-six episodes to be exact, as first reported by Danica Leninsky in "Orange is the New Black: Biseuxal Erasure." Just once! If that wasn't enough, the depiction of Piper's sexuality among her husband Larry Bloom and her ex-girlfriend Alex Vause reinforces the stigma behind bisexuality. For instance, Larry often refers to his ex-wife as a "lesbian," while Alex often calls Piper "straight." This gives the illusion that Piper' bisexuality isn't legitimate, and merely only experimental in Alex's eyes and not real in Larry's eyes.

Amy Zimmerman in "It Ain't Easy Being Bisexul on TV" puts it perfectly by stating, "Our mainstream media reinforces the notion that bisexuality is either a fun, voluntary act of experimentation or a mere myth through two tried and true tactics: misrepresenting and oversimplifying bisexual characters until they are either punchlines or wet dream fodder, or simply refusing to portray bisexual characters in the first place."

When people learn that

someone's bisexual there's still always the same slew of ignorant questions and statements that follow: "You're not bi, you just can't commit." "You just want to sleep around and not be called a slut like you should be." "You're just confused. It's obvious that you're a dyke from the way that you dress." The one question that I get most often is: "Oh you're bisexual? So, you'd be down for a threesome, right?" Overall, bisexuality isn't widely accepted or talked about unless when it's fetishized among straight males.

There are hundreds of articles that have been written on this topic of fetishizing bisexuality and homosexuality of women. Some even write that it's a positive, that because men oversexualize women, women's sexuality is more widely tolerated. I've had many people tell me basically the same thing: "What are you whining about, tons of people talk about how sexy bi girls are?"

Sure, in a convoluted way, the act of oversexualizing woman has helped people accept bisexual and lesbian women, especially a lot more than bisexual and gay men. But their acceptance is based off pure ignorance and untrue beliefs. Men don't accept bisexuality because it's normal and just part of life. They only accept bisexuality when the women involved are women that are deemed attractive by social standards. If a woman were to walk into a room sporting "stereotypical men clothes" and a short haircut, she wouldn't be accepted as bisexual because she doesn't fit the fantasy of men who "accept" it. It's a load of bullshit.

Ironically, bisexuality among the LGBTQ community isn't even accepted either. As Denise Ingram stated in "A Double Life: Bisexual Bias in the Gay Community," "We like to joke that's the one thing straights and gays agree on: They don't understand bisexuals." And why? Many believe that LGBTQ people don't accept bisexuality because of the same reasons that straight people

don't: that it doesn't exist and bisexual people are too confused or too afraid to admit that they're actually just gay. As stated by Marcus Morgan in "Bisexuals: putting the B back in LGBT," "A lot of the people using the LGBT scene are bisexuals in the closet – they came out as gay or lesbian because they knew that would get a good reception."

Because people who identify as bisexual aren't accepted in either the world of homosexuality or the world of heterosexuality, they feel ostracized and alienated. Therefore, those who identify as bisexual are often less likely to come out than those who are gay or lesbian because of fear of backlash from both communities.

Unfortunately, this sort of discord creates a lot of guilt and shame among bisexuals who then end up suffering from mental health problems as a result. According to a study published in the Journal of Adolescent Heath that investigated mental health symptoms among bisexual, homosexual, and questioning individuals, "Bisexual and questioning females endorsed significantly higher scores on the depression, anxiety, and traumatic distress subscales than did heterosexual females. Lesbians, bisexual females, and questioning females all exhibited significantly higher lifetime suicide scores than heterosexual females."

Although we live in a society that seems to be more accepting of homosexuality, we have only made a small step in the right direction. It's 2017 and we have barely made a dent in the march to provide everyone with equal rights despite their sexuality. Through this fight however, we have been inadvertently silencing the voices of those who aren't either gay or straight while conversing on the topic of sexuality.

We have been focusing on the big black-and-white details when the matter is so much more than that. Sexuality is more than just being gay or straight: it's a spectrum and we need to

honor that when we fight for equal rights regarding sexuality. We need to spend more time on speaking out and educating people about bisexuality. The media should spend more time portraying accurate bisexual characters and stop reinforcing ignorant beliefs. In all, we as a whole just need to stop forgetting the B in LGBTQ.

http://www.gallup.com/poll/201731/lgbt-identification-rises.aspx

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/feb/15/bisexuality-lgbt-history-month

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2016.02.005

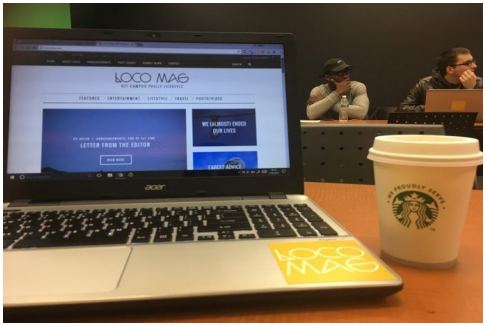
http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2016/images/01/06/nhsr88.pdf

http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/08/14/no-network-for-bisexual-men-and-women.html

http://the-artifice.com/orange-is-the-new-black-bisexual-erasure/

Loco Mag: A History

Issue #30 Through the Years
By: Helen



To celebrate Loco Mag's fifth birthday, we decided a quick look back into our past was in order, if only to congratulate ourselves on how much we've grown.

I asked a few of the staff members throughout the years about what Loco was like when they were here at Arcadia working on it.

Loco was born out of a class project between three people – Nicole Sowinski, Lauren Pickens, and Amanda Wyszynski – in the fall of 2011. "At the time the only publication was managed by the university so I think we were all intrigued about

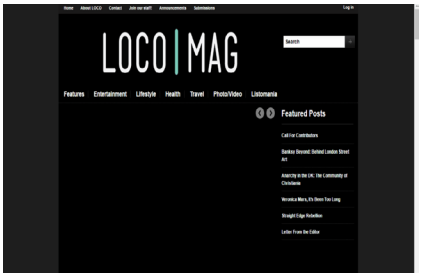
They spent that fall planning out what to do (making a magazine is a big deal, who knew?). They had to come up with everything from scratch, from the name to the site. Lauren explained how they came up with the name Loco Mag: "We loved the idea of trains, they're always moving taking people somewhere, and we wanted to transport people with our writing. The train was also our connection to Philadelphia, the closest cultural hub. The first version of the name was locomotion. Loco was a short, snappy way of getting our point across. It also means crazy in Spanish which we

The OG logo

Nicole, Lauren, and Amanda did a lot of the work in the beginning designing and managing the site, but in the spring of 2012, more people came on board, including Bri Wink. “There were about 8 of us all together… We didn’t have any contributors so we basically had to write tons in order to fill content. There were maybe 12 articles max. But it was fun! We got a few readers, mostly our parents, but there was some buzz about it around campus and it just felt really good to be a part of this really cool student magazine that was brand new.”

After the first semester, more people joined the staff, and they moved to a 3-issues-per-semester schedule. Outside contributors were sending in content, and the site started getting hits from the mysterious cyberspace – not just parents and on-campus friends.

Here’s a screenshot of the Loco site from 2014 (thanks for all you do, wayback machine). Fun fact, this issue was called “Against the Grain,” and featured two of our all-time most popular articles, Stop Sending Me Dick Pics (Brittany doing the Lord’s work) and Five Nonconformists Who Made History.



In 2014-15, the staff decided to revamp the site, which involved changing the logo and the website design. It was then that the logo that you see up at the top of the page right now and the yellow-and-white color scheme came to be.

Loco's focus has broadened as the staff grows. Everyone brings their own voice and interests to the magazine. And as the world and staff have changed, the Loco voice has changed with it. "I think the bubble surrounding the happy, carefree college student has kind of burst and made room for more politically active voices," Bri said.

So watch out, guys. For the ten-year anniversary, the Editor in Chief's history round-up will probably go something like this:

"After successfully bringing down the Trump administration, the Loco team set to work on world peace and supplying fresh drinking water for everyone. Once that was accomplished, we set our sights on waging a war against AI, which is really the next big step and, I think, Loco's final frontier."

Thanks for being along for the ride, dear reader, and I hope to see you here for many issues to come!

An Ode to All Time Low

Issue #31 Raison D'etre
By: Sophie

For many people there will be one, and sometimes more than one, band or musician that will leave an impact on their life. Whether they became your one solace and personal escape from your own reality or their music inspired you to pursue your own dreams like they did for themselves. Regardless of the various reasons why the artist is important to you, there will always be the constant gratitude of the impact they've left on your life.

There's one specific band that did it for me, it was none other than four talented Baltimore natives that came together in 2003 to form All Time Low. So Alex Gaskarth, Jack Barakat, Rian Dawson, and Zack Merrick- This one is for you guys.

Middle school was a weird time in my life to begin with. I was awkward, weird and constantly dying my hair to keep up with my wanna-be scene kid look. At the time, music quickly became a big part of my life. I was obsessing over Green Day's 21st Century Breakdown album and buying any My Chemical Romance t-shirt I could get my hands on at Hot Topic. One night I couldn't sleep and I remember turning on the TV and ending up on MTV's Music Video Channel and these four attractive young guys are on the screen as one sings, "Maybe it's not my weekend, but it's gonna be my year." I soon found out those four guys were the members of All Time Low and it was Alex Gaskarth singing a line from their song Weightless that ended up sticking with me for years to come.

Friends, pets, hobbies, and dreams have all come and gone, but the one thing that has been a constant for nine years since the first night I heard their music is All Time Low. They're my go to guys- when I'm going through a rough time I listen to Weightless. When I need a bop to rock out to in the car I blast Don't You Go. When I'm thinking about a shitty guy I dated, I put on Thanks to You. Somehow, their songs make me feel like I'm untouchable and everything will be okay. They become more than just catchy songs coming out of my speakers- they're stories and messages, and each time it feels as if Alex is singing right to me and knows just what to say.

Outside of the fact their music speaks to me in ways no one else's does- Alex, Jack, Rian, and Zack are some of the humblest people I know. Whether it be interacting with fans at meet and greets, concerts or just on social media, All Time Low goes above and beyond to keep their fans involved in everything they do (check out the Missing You music video). One simple follow on Twitter or one hug or high five from any member can easily mean the world to a fan, and the majority of us hustlers (the nickname given to All

Time Low's fans) hold onto every one of those moments dearly. I met "All Time Low" recently at an album signing and those few minutes where they were right in front of me, high fiving me and talking about rompers, was honestly one of the most spectacular moments of my life. Yes, something that simple can go a very long way for a fangirl like myself. As I've grown up, so has "All Time Low." Their music has developed and changed with the times, and in their personal lives they're reaching milestone moments, like settling down with the right woman. I can't help but be nothing but proud of this band because everything they do amazes me and I can never understand how the world got so lucky to have these four humans come together to produce music that brings so many people joy.

All Time Low has inspired me in ways I never considered a band could. They ignited my passion for music and continue to be one of the biggest influences in my life. What better way to live your life *but every step of the way there's been a song to carry me through and to express how I feel. I will forever be thankful for Zachary Merrick, Jack Barakat, Rian Dawson and Alex Gaskarth. -Siobhan (Toronto, Canada)*

I love them, I really do. When I'm dealing with difficult situations, I listen to their music and it makes me feel at peace, like I'm not alone anymore. I know that they don't offer me a total solution to my problems, but they definitely offer me a minute to escape. They encourage me to be who I am, who I really am, even though people have told me before the way i feel and think is wrong. I feel as if All Time Low understands me. When I listen to them or see them I can't help but do anything except smile, even when I'm crying! I don't just listen to All Time Low when I'm upset-their music is always with me. When I'm having a good time with my friends, family or on my own, the smile that their music brings me can be seen for miles. I will never forget when I saw them live.

It was only once, but it was one of the most precious memories I have. They've been there for the past four years of my life and I feel so lucky to call them my idols because they're the best people I know. Their music is uniting people, making us happy, holding us up during hard times and providing support for us when we need it the most. -Luz Nazarena (Argentina)

Don't get me wrong, I have liked my fair share of bands but none of them have made as big of an impact on me as All Time Low. Not only are the members super talented musically, they are very sweet and genuinely care about their fans. I am a huge believer in music and what it can do for people, and this band has done so much for me. I listen to their music when I'm sad, happy, angry or just need to escape or feel loved. This band has also brought me closer to people who live all over the world and I have shared experiences with people that I will never forget. I never knew that being a fan of a band could connect you so strongly to its members and fan base. The boys in All Time Low go the extra mile to reach out to every fan and recognize them on Twitter, at their shows, or any time they get the chance to. I genuinely feel like I am close friends with this band even though I have never met them in person. All Time Low have a familiarity to me and every time I listen to their music, watch YouTube videos of them or read their tweets I feel at home.

I really respect Alex, Jack, Rian, and Zack for sticking to their true selves even though they have been in the music business for so long. I understand that no one is perfect but I think these four guys are pretty close. They have never become egotistical and they never push their fans away. I feel like the more popularity they gain, the more down to earth they become. Every day I feel that this band has the same amount of love for me as I do for them and I couldn't thank them enough for everything they have gotten me through. I think that All Time Low are

in it for the long haul and I'm so glad to see what the future brings. -Natalie (@ sicklittlegame)

This band- Where do I even begin? I discovered All Time Low when I was younger. I remember my brother use to play one specific song, "Coffee Shop Soundtrack," quite often. I was about 7-8ish (I'm almost 17 now). He bought a couple of their other albums a few years later and from there I was sold. Since then, this band has been there for me through so much, without even knowing it. They aren't just some typical band you switch off on the radio when you've heard their hit song about a thousand times. They're different; much more out there. They're goofy, fun, and just plain crazy. But that's what's great about them. They know to throw a sick party and make dumb childish dick jokes here and there, but can still get down to business when needed. They put so much hard work into what they do, for the fans of course. I have never seen a band that appreciates their fans more than these guys. It just shows how caring and genuine they are. And the fans- well we're more like a huge family of friends that enjoy the same music and it's just incredible. I've met many friends through All Time Low that I wouldn't know what to do without. These boys are so beyond talented-Alex's beautiful lyrical writing/ vocals, Jack's sick guitar wailing, Rian's headbanger drum beats, and Zack's ground shaking bass. Every member has their own thing, and when you marry these four elements, what you've got is one big bowl of passion. These guys have been together since highschool and have not quit once. It's so refreshing to see someone put so much hard work and dedication into what they love. These guys have helped me through my lowest times and I couldn't thank them enough. Their live shows, just, wow. They're so energetic and really keep the crowd entertained. It's just one big emotional roller coaster. If you haven't listened to All Time Low yet, you gotta. They are so spe

cial, like no other. I promise you you're in for a real treat. -Hann (@lyrlive)

When it comes to putting into words how much I love All Time Low, I really don't know where to begin. All Time Low is a band that I will always love and defend with everything in me until I die. All Time Low, to me, is a safe place. All Time Low is happiness. All Time Low is laughter. All Time Low is family. Not only are they an amazing (and hilarious) band that makes amazing music, but they are also the sweetest people in the world, who care so very much about their fans and never fail to show it.

I discovered the band at a very dark point in my life, and I have them to thank for helping me find my way out of that darkness. With emotional and inspiring songs such as "Therapy" and "Missing You," I can remind myself that I'm not alone, and that all storms will soon pass. Their other songs are incredible as well; they make me want to smile and dance whenever I hear them. I've made so many beautiful and absolutely amazing lifelong friends through the band, and I have them to thank for that, as well. All of us as All Time Low fans are so proud of the band and far they've come. The Hustlers really are such a beautiful community, brought together by four talented guys who love us more than anything. We love them, too. Thank you, All Time Low. -Nia (North Carolina, @nianbhd)

I discovered All Time Low around middle school, but it wasn't until eighth grade that I fell head over heels in love with the band and everything about them. Because of this band, I've met people who I now consider to be my very best friends for life. I never would have met them if not for All Time Low. All the hype whilst waiting for "Future Hearts" was full of both humor and happiness. When I think back to that time, I truly believe it was the best time of my life and it was all thanks to them. I had the pleasure of meeting the guys last summer and it

was a day I will never forget. Even though it was only for a few seconds, finally seeing the people who I look up to gave me a feeling of pure joy. People come and go, but this band and their music is something I will always be able to rely on, whether I need a mood boost or I just want to jam out. Words will never be able to begin to describe how much I appreciate All Time Low, both as a whole and as individuals. Alex, Jack, Rian, and Zack are four absolutely wonderful guys and I am so happy that I discovered their music. I may be just one person out of a million others, but they've truly helped me become a better and stronger person. Thank you so much All Time Low. -Carly (Pennsylvania)

I remember the first time I saw All Time Low perform back in 2009. I was 14 and had just moved back to Maryland from Germany. All I wanted to do was go to Six Flags to see them play. They were absolutely amazing and my mom bought me a t-shirt (that I still have) and a few days later I bought "Nothing Personal." I'm 22 now and have grown up a lot since then, but that album (and all their others) mean a lot to me and have helped me through emotional times. All Time Low have really helped me get to know myself better and deal with issues in a positive way. They put words to the emotions I feel and were there when no one else was. I'm forever grateful for them being a band and will always love and support them! -Destiny

All Time Low has always been a band that is super important to me. I'm from Baltimore, just like they are, so to see a hometown band get so big is something I just find incredible. But I think my favorite thing is that no matter how big they get, they never forget where they came from. I've had the pleasure of meeting these guys, and seeing them several times for hometown shows, and each time it just seems like they get better. I am so thankful for the music they make because it really makes you realize that they

go through all the same things we do. I know that All Time Low means so much to so many people, and it has made me very proud to watch fans grow up with the band. Life can get pretty hectic and stressful, but with their music I find myself able to take a break from it all, and I could never thank them enough for that. -Sierra Rubin (Baltimore, MD)

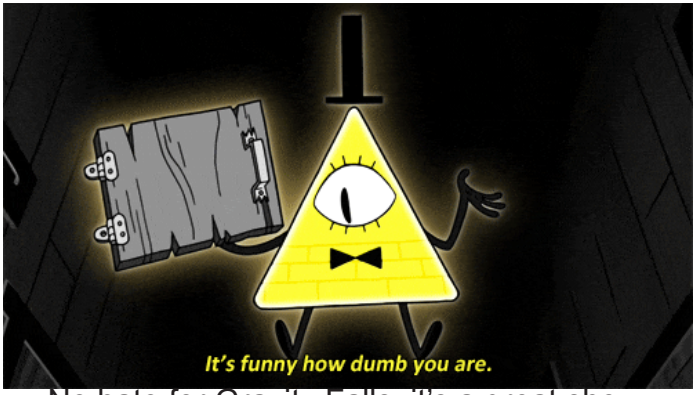
To me, All Time Low has become a safety net. As much as I listen to their music when I'm feeling happy, they are the first band I turn to whenever I'm going through a hard time. Seeing them live is one of my favourite things in the world because whenever I do, I feel completely happy, because I can escape from whatever problems I may be facing for a while. Although the band may not always be able to solve my problems, for me, they do offer support getting through them. It was also thanks to All Time Low that I met my best friend, Lauren. What started out as an online friendship progressed to meeting at shows and I feel really lucky that this band brought her into my life. In short, this band and the people I have met through them have become a support network. I am 23 now and I have been following their music since I was 12 years old. I couldn't be more proud of how far they have come since then and I can't wait to see what they will do next. -Laura (221Believer)

I Want to Believe: Illuminati

Issue #32 Through a Prism
By: Lana

Prisms and pyramids, all-seeing eyes, did somebody say far-fetched paranoia? It's time to introduce the king— no, the overlord— of all conspiracies, the one I've procrastinated on for three weeks, the Illuminati! Hey there Loco community, it's been awhile! You saw this coming, didn't you?

For decades, rumors of an elite society have circulated through the public, reaching conspiracy theorists and average citizens alike. It is omnipresent in conspiracy circles, Hollywood films (see: Angels and Demons), and is even referenced in children's shows like Disney XD's Gravity Falls. The Illuminati has become iconic; a symbol, a meme, an organization to fear. But what do we really know about this so-called "secret society," and where did it come from? Why do people believe in it? From Beyoncé to Baphomet to Bohemian Grove, I'm going to need you to stick with me, because we're in for a wild ride!



No hate for Gravity Falls; it's a great show.

I have no shame in sounding like an orator on Ancient Aliens. Ah, it's good to be home.

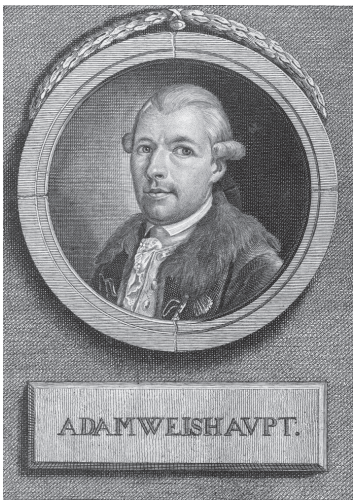
For those of you who don't know, the Illuminati is supposedly a sect of elite overlords working behind the scenes, controlling each minute part of our existence. Before we dive in, however, a disclaimer: there are sects related to the Illuminati that actually exist, but there are an equal amount of fictitious cults whose goals are exaggerated— or completely unknown to us. Here and now, we're addressing the shadier side of the secret society.

Described by BBC as "a smorgasbord of every intrigue under the sun," the Illuminati conspiracy has foggy origins and is thusly shrouded in mystery. Publicity has only served to further the already-complex theories, and the resulting conspiracies are, well, a clusterf*ck.

In the midst of all the confusion, there are two clear histories regarding the birth of the Illuminati. Some theorists say the secret society can trace their lineage back thousands of years, which would make the sect far more powerful and global than the public originally imagined. However, in this theory, their conception was the result of genetic manipulation and breeding between humanity and a reptilian extraterrestrial

race. Discounting that for the sake of our sanity, we'll acknowledge only theory number two, its far more credible counterpart.

According to the more modern theory, the Illuminati began as the thought-child of an 18th century Bavarian thinker, Adam Weishaupt. Weishaupt came from a family of Jewish converts to Christianity, and he was raised only by his uncle, a scholar. He completed his studies, became a professor, and started a family. All was well until 1784, when his innermost, controversial ideas were exposed by the Bavarian government.



It's ya boy, Adam W.
Photo Credits: "Adam Weishaupt", *Wikipedia*

Weishaupt, having grown up with the deeply conservative and Catholic Bavarian state, began to feel that both the monarchy and the church were repressing his free will to think and act. He eventually became convinced that religion was not an adequate governing system and decided to investigate other forms of government. He toiled with Freemasonry (this is a subject for another time, kids), but became disenchanted with their ideas and policies and instead created his own society. As it was, "the Order of the Illuminati" became a somewhat anti-religious and free thinking group, focused entirely on 'illumination' of the mind.

Despite the position his society held against religion, however, Weishaupt himself was not against religion as a whole; rather, he disapproved of the way its policies were imposed.

“[The Illuminati] offers freedom from all religious prejudices; cultivates the social virtues; and animates them by a great, a feasible, and speedy prospect of universal happiness. It is necessary to create a state of liberty and moral equality, freed from the obstacles which subordination, rank, and riches, continually throw in our way.”

-Adam Weishaupt, founder of the Illuminati.

With these ideals in mind, on the evening of May 1st, 1776, the first official meeting of the Illuminati was held to establish the rules of the order. In the years following, with funding from the bank due to bankers themselves being members, the Illuminati continued to grow both in size and diversity. It's possible that by the end of 1784, the Illuminati had between 2,000 and 3,000 members.

Unfortunately, as the sect grew, the innermost members argued amongst themselves, as they began to harbor different ideas about the path of the Order. This civil war of sorts would eventually lead to the discovery of the previously 'secret' society and a crackdown from the Bavarian government. The resulting investigation shut down the sect. Weishaupt lost his job as a professor. He was forced to live in exile, and after his departure, the Bavarian state considered the Illuminati dismantled.

boy were they wrong

Whew, after that wordy explanation, where does that leave us?

In the years following the Illuminati's supposed annulment, facts became mixed with fiction. New ideas about the 'real' ultimate goal of the society surfaced; in actuality, their desire was to form a sort of 'New World Order,' or 'one world government,' in which all religions and opposing governments are subjugated. Believers in this theory go on to say that nearly all wars since the French Revolution were planned and executed by the society in pursuit of their goals.

Now, do I believe all of this is

true? Call me a skeptic, but it seems a bit Big Brother-ish, doesn't it? …Then again, Donald Trump is in office, and Kellyanne Conway literally quoted Orwell's 1984, so God knows what's actually happening. Is this what hell looks like?

Photo Credit: Tenor.com

Regardless, according to most accounts, the Illuminati was (is?) a real, tangible society in which people believed and followed. The question is, did it ever really disappear? This is the question conspiracy theorists are dying to answer, as there is very little proof of historical fact to work with.

As I'm sure you've heard, our modern idea of the Illuminati is largely based on a sort of Satanic cult for the rich and famous: Hollywood performers or other successful people— Queen Bey, of course, among others. This newer, elaborate conspiracy suggests that new recruits— that is, up and coming stars— trade their freedom for fame, and are inducted into the ever-growing sect of elitists. In the creepier version of the theory, inductees are also possessed by demons when they join the ranks. Obviously, there is little proof of such an induction ceremony, except for little historical facts regarding the actual initiation process as it was.

Following the discovery of Weishaupt's ~incendiary~ activities, the Bavarian authorities seized secret papers that allegedly kept information regarding the order's initiation. To ascend to the next level in the society, for example, required a report, by the recruit, on his personal flaws, the identity of his enemies, and a list of each of his books. Official convocation required the sacrifice of his interests to those of the society.

Now, maybe it's just me, but that sounds a little less severe than selling one's soul to the devil… So, how did

this modern idea become the norm? The answer is surprisingly, and perhaps disappointingly, simple.

The idea of the Illuminati that we've adopted today has barely anything to do with its Bavarian origins. David Bramwell, an author and broadcaster, has completely dedicated himself to separating fact from fiction in the society. The Illuminati's modern incarnation can be attributed to a little-known 1960s text, the Principia Discordia. The idea of the Principia Discordia was based upon Discordianism, a concept created by enthused anarchists wishing to cause, and I quote, "civil disobedience, practical jokes and hoaxes."

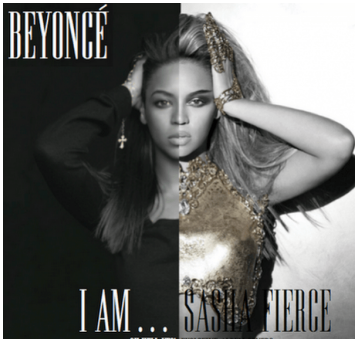
The novel did not receive any critical acclaim on the book market, but one writer specifically, Robert Anton Wilson, decided "the world was becoming too authoritarian, too tight, too closed, and too controlled." Basically, he wanted to reintroduce society to chaos, and the best way to do so was to spread misinformation through whatever means possible. And, you guessed it: he decided he would do so by beginning with stories about the Illuminati.

Photo Credit: Gettyimages.com

"It's an idealistic means of getting people to wake up to the suggested realities that they inhabit."

-David Bramwell, author.

Clearly, the culprit here is fake news, but hardcore theorists are not so easily defeated; you could blame it on miscommunication through the years, or simple lack of research (although mixing up sacrificing your interests is a long way from sacrificing your body and soul to an evil immortal being). Whatever the case, such theorists believe there is evidence of unholy activities—like possession— in the modern Illuminati through examples like Beyoncé's onstage alter ego, Sasha Fierce.



Beyoncé vs Sasha Fierce
Photo Credit: Paulagalli.com

In interviews, Queen Bey has discussed losing herself to her character as if they're two different people. For some, this is evidence enough of demonic possession, although one could argue that it's, hey, a stage name? Or maybe schizophrenia?

It's not just Beyoncé, either. "Demonic possession caught on tape" aside, theorists cite other sources to prove their beliefs true. Because we, the American public, are ridiculous, the masses have gathered photos of every other "example" of a secret society in the works, as told by subtle hand signs.

Jay-Z and Bey Carter flashing a triangle
Photo Credit: gnosticwarrior.com

This triangular gesture, according to the public, represents the Carters' affiliation with the Illuminati, but Jay says it's just a symbol for his entertainment company, Roc Nation.

ROCNATION

Logo Courtesy of Roc Nation Entertainment

Be that as it may, other big-name celebrities have flashed similar signs, using either a triangular-shape or the international symbol for "okay," which looks like this:

Hiya, baby Biebs.
Photo Credit: https://www.illuminatirex.com/

Conspirators believe that this symbol in particular represents their affiliation with the devil, as the three fingers and the 'o' could be interpreted as "666." It's more common than you might expect in their photos, but with celebrity photography, there's only so many poses, am I right? It's up to you to decide if these similarities are a coincidence.

While I honestly can't tell you why Tom Cruise is flashing the "Roc Nation" sign with Kanye West, I can't completely bring myself to believe that all of the above are worshippers of Satan. Especially not Emma Watson! Goddamn love Emma Watson. What a beautiful soul.

Anyway, while many famous people— most notably, Beyoncé— denied ties with the Illuminati ('y'all haters corny with that Illuminati mess'), the mystery surrounding the hand signs remains. It could easily be chalked up to pure coincidence, but of course, the theory lives on and evolves. The next level, even more demonic aspect of the Illuminati x Hollywood theory, is Baphomet and the Bohemian Grove.

I know— what the hell is that? Well, Baphomet is a continuation of the horned-god archetype, a common figure associated with occultism and/or paganism. It is believed by some scholars that "Baphometh" is a corruption of "Mahomet," another name for the Prophet Muhammad. Over time, however, the mystery surrounding its history has grown, and so too have the interpretations of the name and its origins. So, really, it's open to interpretation. According to some worshippers, "[Baphomet] embodies opposites and celebrates contrasts."

…Not such a bad thing, right? Maybe not, but at least in some way, this goat-headed deity holds sway over the Illuminati. Many believers point at pop-culture references to the Sabbatic goat as done by Madonna and Bey to affirm their affiliation with the Order, but then, you can't prove anything with just a

few onstage costumes, can you?

Madonna and Baphomet.Bey as compared to the deity. See: Celebrities Wearing Baphomet.

Whether he is blatantly referenced by the popstars or not, according to one occultist, “Baphomet serves as a poignant reminder of the dangers of state-sponsored, religiously justified oppression.”

Does that ring a bell? Sounds a bit similar to Adam Weishaupt’s original idea for the Order of the Illuminati, no? Indeed, Baphomet serves as a ruler of sorts, a symbol of the occult practices supposedly taking place during gatherings for the Illuminati at a place called Bohemian Grove.

Bohemian Grove is a campground in California that is privately owned by a men’s art group known as the Bohemian Club, and members of the group come from various affluential backgrounds, from musicians to former U.S. Presidents. The mascot of the Bohemian Club is an owl, representative of knowledge— which, of course, is one of the many pursuits of the Order of the Illuminati; that is, illuminating the mind. The motto of the club is “Weaving Spiders Come Not Here,” implying that outside concerns and networking are not to be discussed during the meetings.

I’m sorry, did somebody say, “cult?” Oh, that’s right. I did.

The Bohemian Club actually has a lot of shady club rituals, such as the “Cremation of Care” and the Grove Play, both impractically expensive performances that look strikingly like something a secret society would conduct. So, okay, Illuminati conspirators. I’ll give you this one.

Spooky as it may appear, according to an investigative journalist, it is far less mystery and far more beer. Alex Jones and his cameraman infiltrated Bohemian Grove, and at the end of their stay, their exploration was discussed by Welsh journalist

Jon Ronson. Ronson documented his opinion on the activities at the Grove in his own book, where he wrote:

“My lasting impression was of an all-pervading sense of immaturity: the Elvis impersonators, the pseudo-pagan spooky rituals, the heavy drinking. These people might have reached the apex of their professions, but emotionally they seemed trapped in their college years.”

So what does this all mean, conclusively? It means that the Illuminati we know and theorize about is a little less than a conspiracy and more exaggerated history and weird rich people.

“The idea of an untouchable, secretive elite must resonate with people that feel left behind and powerless.”
-Sophia Smith Galer, BBC author.

In reality, we have to wonder if the whole concept of the Illuminati is just an elaborate ruse to criticize those who have made a successful living in showbusiness or elsewhere. Why else would it have endured? In other words, they want someone to blame or some other reason for their own lack of success. A sad truth, no matter how you look at it.

“Is Illuminati real or it is our way of undermining each other’s success?”
-Unarine Ramaru.

There’s a lot going on here; what can I say? The Illuminati is such a melting pot of interconnected conspiracies, it’s almost impossible to separate fact from fiction. If you’re interested in reading more about the “real, confirmed” Illuminati, check it out on Complex or Buzzfeed. If you want to read the Principia Discordia, it’s available on Amazon!

The Illuminati is a sprawling subject, and we’ve covered only a mere paint stroke on a full canvas. There is so much more to discover, but for us non-famous folk, maybe it will forever remain a mystery. Flashing gang signs is one thing, but human sacrifices

are another. My conclusion: New World Order is a negative. What do you think?

Quoth BBC, if you like this story, you might also like:

“The strange photographs used to ‘prove’ conspiracy theories”
“How to avoid falling for lies and fake news”
“Why are people so incredibly gullible?”

See you guys at Bohemian Grove!

. . .

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We Panic In A Pew

Issue #33 Racecar Backwards
By: Leah

I sit in the front row at church next to my best friend, Alana,* clutching the steak knife in my purse. The minister is leading the congregation in prayer, but I cannot focus on any of his words. I concentrate on my own murderous thoughts.

I am going to kill her. I am going to take this knife and stab her in church. There will be blood and the prayer will have to stop because they will need to call 911. And then they will take me away and I will go to prison and my family will be disappointed in me. But I'm going to do it anyway. I'm gonna kill her.

Alana knows about the knife in my purse. She knows that I am thinking about killing her. And she also knows that I had rehearsed these lines with my therapist, whose graphic suggestions earlier this week almost had me running out of the session in discomfort. But here I am, gripping the knife in its handbag hiding spot, following his directions.

Before you call the police on me—or him, for that

matter— I should clarify that neither of us are murderers. In fact, the very idea of possibly being classified as a wrongdoer is one of my biggest fears. And during my sophomore year of high school, I spent roughly eight to ten hours per day worrying about it. The reason? I was mentally ill.

For most of my childhood, I was obsessed with being the “perfect” daughter. The oldest grandchild and great-grandchild on both sides of my close-knit family, my identity centered on being a good example to my sisters and cousins who depended on me. I was everyone’s favorite babysitter—at thirteen, the toy bag I brought with me to babysitting jobs would beat Mary Poppins’ in a second. And in school, I was a model student—hardworking, polite, and, according to my teachers, a “natural leader.” When I started high school, the lowest grade I had ever received for an assignment was an A minus. And that, in my mind, was barely tolerable; I remember crying the entire bus ride home one day when I received a 92 on a test.

It turns out, though, that it’s not always possible to be perfect. And unlike my equally high-achieving friends who could accept the occasional setback, any hiccup in my self-imposed expectations put me on high alert. I spent hours writing and rewriting handouts and reorganizing my planners because I wanted the handwriting to be perfect. I started dozens of new projects, only to abandon them because they weren’t flawless—but even that gave me anxiety because I worried I would be judged by my teachers and parents for the unfinished work. So I would start a completely new project—the night before it was due—and stay up until the last possible moment trying to reach perfection.

The same went for relationships. My unreasonable standard for being the perfect friend morphed into perverse fears about harming them. The fears ranged from physical violence—I worried that I wouldn’t be able to

control myself around knives, for example—to mental concerns, like the worry that my words would be misinterpreted as hurtful or even sexual. And because I treated each worry with equal importance, even the smallest concern had the potential to take over my entire day. By tenth grade, these intrusive obsessions had replaced the time that I should have been spending asleep.

It was then that my parents realized I needed professional help. Several tests and doctor appointments later, and I was officially diagnosed with a well-known but often misunderstood anxiety disorder: OCD.

Contrary to what Target's OCD sweater may have conveyed back in 2015, the abbreviation does not stand for Obsessive Christmas Disorder. Nor is it a term to describe someone who is highly organized or who likes things to be clean. It's not a mood either— people cannot feel "so OCD" one moment and not be OCD the next. Rather, those who have Obsessive Compulsive Disorder experience legitimate, debilitating symptoms leading up to a formal diagnosis. And these symptoms are much more nuanced than the average person realizes; there are actually many different subtypes of OCD.

For me, the disorder manifested itself around the same time that I became more invested in my faith. The Christian congregation that I grew up in is a place of refuge, love, and community. It is also a place of many traditions— monologue sermons, veils in church, and modest dress. Though not the intention, these conservative traditions can sometimes translate into strictly-enforced rules rather than common practices. And for a girl with a propensity for ritualistic behavior, this environment became a breeding ground for OCD.

Religious-based OCD has its own sub-category: Scrupulosity. As the OCD Center of Los Angeles says in this article, "those afflicted with Scrupulosity fear that their

effort to live according to their spiritual values not only isn't good enough, but is in direct violation of God….for the scrupulous, the content of their thoughts hit painfully close to home." My fear of killing Alana was exacerbated in the knowledge that doing so would land me in Hell.

Because my faith is so important to me, OCD was that much more agonizing. Thou shalt not kill. It's a fairly straightforward commandment, one that most people would agree with. Yet my world revolved around it more than the average person. So how does one separate religious conviction or belief with obsessive-compulsive rituals when the two often overlap and look so similar? In an environment where prayer is a daily practice, my pleas with God to forgive my murderous thoughts and help me control my unwielding hand didn't seem all that out of place.

In reality, though, the prayers were about as compulsive as a ritual can get. In an attempt to neutralize and reduce my worry and guilt, I would "make deals" with God, ask for reassurance from my mom that I hadn't sinned, or repeatedly apologize to my friends. Sometimes, I would even avoid going to church or being with friends because I knew doing so would trigger more anxiety.

These compulsive tactics proved futile; any relief I felt from avoidance and reassurance seeking behaviors was temporary. In fact, they only reinforced the validity of my obsessive thoughts and continued the OCD cycle. I was stuck in a hamster wheel of obsession, anxiety, compulsion, and temporary relief. Nothing I tried could set me free.

Thankfully, there is a therapeutic solution. As with all forms of OCD, the most effective method for treating scrupulosity is Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP). ERP has its roots in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, an approach that places emphasis on mindfulness— helping people to recognize unwant-

ed thoughts as the obsessions that they are. For me, this meant learning how to identify the distinct difference between my spiritual beliefs and my distorted obsessive thoughts. This cognitive restructuring is a painstakingly slow process; it's hard to convince a person that his or her own thoughts are illegitimate.

But ERP goes beyond mindfulness. This behavioral therapy involves intentionally creating experiences that will trigger OCD episodes—for example, forcing myself to sit next to a drawer with knives—while not doing any compulsive or avoidant behaviors. By preventing my normal response to this exposure— in the same example, not allowing me to throw away the knives—my therapist was able to prove to me that my fear was just a fear.

It wasn't quite that simple, though. My therapeutic sessions also involved imaginal exposure, where I had to pretend to do the things that scared me until I realized that my worries were irrational. Take the babysitting example. I was an exceptional caregiver, but I often spent unhealthy amounts of time hyper-focused on newborns' fontanelles— the "soft spot" on infants' skulls that harden several months after birth when the sutures fuse together. This obsession tormented me because I knew how important it was to be careful when holding an infant. One afternoon, I was doing my math homework and holding my sleeping two-month old cousin in my arms when I suddenly became paralyzed by fear that I would take my pencil and stab her, piercing the fontanel's membrane. To relieve me of this pain, I threw away the pencils, prayed feverishly, and kept checking my cousin to make sure I hadn't stabbed her. After that incident, I avoided holding babies.

The corresponding imaginal exposure for this specific fear involved pretending to follow through with it. For thirty minutes straight, I sat across from my therapist

with a baby doll on my lap, stabbing the top of its head with a pencil. Ten minutes in, the therapist started playing screaming child sounds at full blast. He covered the head with fake blood, increasing my anxiety to an almost unbearable level. I wasn't allowed to throw away the pencil, run out of the room, or try to assure myself that I wasn't committing murder. Out loud, I repeated the same sentences: I'm stabbing this baby. I'm killing it. Nothing is stopping me.

It may sound like torture— or even insanity— to hand an unstable person a "weapon" and force her to destroy a doll. But it worked. Eventually, my anxiety hit its peak and then began to decline on its own, without the help of compulsive response. This fear subsided, and almost like magic, I no longer felt plagued by the worry that I would hurt my little cousins. I had powered through, and felt free to babysit again.

Exposure Response Prevention Therapy is an effective but lengthy process. My weeks were filled up with back-to-back sessions like the one I just described. Each session addressed a different fear; my therapist created an intensive plan that catered directly to my specific obsessions. We worked our way up from minimal anxiety-inducing exposures— such as sending an email with a typo—to more intense exposures— like chanting curse words in the hospital chapel. Eventually, it was time to step out of the closed walls of the clinic and bring the imaginal exposure into my real world.

Which is why I was sitting next to Alana with the steak knife.

Today, five years post-diagnosis, four years post-ERP therapy, and three years post-hospitalization, I can sit in church without panicking. I can hold my baby cousins without worrying. And I can call up Alana without fearing she will be mad at me. Most importantly, I can practice my beliefs more freely and authentically.

But there are others who haven't overcome OCD. Scrupulosity is not partial to any one Christian doctrine or even Christianity in general. Rather, it "custom fits its message of doubt to the specific practices and beliefs of the sufferer." Check out this website for more information about scrupulosity across religions.

For more information about general OCD, check out the International OCD Foundation: https://iocdf.org/about-ocd/finding-help/

Reflections of a Man Who Has Gotten His Tongue Stuck on an Ice Cube Too Many Time

Issue #34 The Chill Issue

By: Paulie

To me, the best part about a cup of water has always been the ice cubes at the end. When I pour myself a glass of water, I always put in ice cubes, and after I've finished the water, I suck or chew on them as one last bit of hydration before finishing my beverage. I do this at restaurants too, much to the dismay of my mother. After I finish a drink, I take a swig of my cup and pour those oddly shaped ice-cubes in my mouth.[1]

My dear love of ice cubes extends beyond just sucking on the aftermath of my drinks though. Often times, when I'm lying at home[2] and get a tint of thirst in my mouth, I go to the freezer and pop out a cube from my tray and stick it in my mouth. This is what I have grown to know as a gamble. Although I've

been doing this since I was about five years old and discovered where the ice trays in my houses freezer was, I seem to have learnt literally nothing.

Every single time I put an ice cube in my mouth, I'm taking a small risk. In the optimal scenario, the ice cube lands smoothly in my mouth and I place it in the left pouch of my cheek as my saliva melts it and I get very slightly hydrated by what is basically freezing cold water. When that happens, for a moment, life is good. However, more often than not, I'd say I actually end up losing the gamble. In this case, as I place the ice cube on my tongue, it instead gets stuck frozen to the surface of my tongue.

At this point, I'm left with a few options. Over the years, I've analyzed them each to great detail and have determined that the specific shape and strength of the particular ice cube could change which option is best. The first, most obvious option, the one an amateur in ice suckling would probably choose, is to simply dangle the ice from the tongue whilst lightly pulling it until it comes off. This option produces a fair amount of gradual pain, and it does take a bit of time, which does cause the tongue to not only get tired, but that freezing feeling of the cube begins to extend unto the whole tongue.

Another option is to place the ice cube within the heat of your mouth, eventually causing it to smoothly slide off the surface of your tongue. This method offers grand convenience, because if the sucker performs it optimally, the cube will not only come off the tongue, but also will leave the cube right in the mouth, leading to immediate sucking. However, if performed wrong, this technique has dire consequences. During the draw-in that brings the cube into the mouth, it's not uncommon for an amateur to miscalculate the trajectory the cube needs to travel. If this happens, the still-freezing cube will attach itself to the outer edges of the sucker's lip, causing even more pain to get the

cube off of the mouth.

Another technique is a classic, but I'm skeptical how well this one really works. In this case, when the sucker discovers that his tongue is attached to the cube he will begin releasing spurts of air while going "ha-ha-haaaa" onto the cube. I believe the thought process here is that by releasing hot air on it, it will melt off the tongue quickly. Personally, I feel this method does not work, but yet I find myself trying it all the time. I simply don't feel the spurts of air have any physical effect on the bridge between my tongue and the cube. Nonetheless, perhaps the benefits of this method come from the placebo effect combined with the fact that blowing on the cube serves as a brief distraction from the fact that your tongue is stuck to an ice cube. Then by the time the distraction is no longer working, the ice cube is probably beginning to become disconnected from the tongue anyway.

There are, of course, other ways to get an ice cube off of your tongue. For example, a masochist may simply pull the cube off as hard as possible, as if he was ripping a band-aid off. I've never tried this method, but I imagine the pain would be a similar sensation to that of pulling a band-aid off, but in this case on the tongue.[3]

As I currently type this piece, I actually do have an ice cube in my mouth. This particular cube was smaller, coming from a mini ice-tray I keep in my freezer behind the larger ice tray. This tray produces cubes that are supposed to be the shape of flowers, but due to the imperfect way water freezes, the cubes tend to come out more as just bumpy circles. Even odder than this though, is the notion that because I have written in such detail about ice cubes and the implications of sucking on them, they have now become an explicit item and moment in my history. In fact, if any reader wants to assume that I am not lying about ice, then everything they have read has become not only a part of my history, but just a part

of history in general.

It is also incredibly jarring for me, the writer, to be thinking about the implications of the reader reading this piece. Although I am a real person who has lived through the typical human experience, all the reader can possibly conceive me as in this moment is a man who sucks ice cubes and sometimes gets them stuck to his tongue. I have also crafted this history for myself by writing this, and now, by acknowledging the history at all, I have also added it into the repertoire of things the reader can associate me with.

It is incredibly odd, and in a way disheartening, that the reader seems to take away all the identity from the writer other than what the writer includes in his piece. If I hadn't delved past ice and it being stuck on my tongue, you, the reader, would probably not have thought past the fact that I enjoy sucking on ice cubes. Of course, I'm presenting this from the notion that the reader is the dominant one in this relationship. More likely though is that the writer has the power to control where the reader's mind goes in relation to his work.

Juan Ponce de Leon is most famous for his adventures trying to discover the Fountain of Youth. The Fountain of Youth, as the name implies, is a magical fountain which contains waters that stop the process of aging, and I am guessing grants immortality. Although he's not really taught much in history classes as far as I know, he's a fairly famous historical figure, and this is the adventure he's most commonly associated with. However, just a tad of research reveals that the stories of him looking for the Fountain of Youth are probably fake. This isn't to say he wasn't one of the greatest Spanish Conquistadors and explorers in all of history. In the 1500's, he basically discovered Florida and Puerto Rico for Spain and led to their first attempts of colonizing the United States. He went on to lead several successful ventures to and from Florida, which was a feat of its own in the

1500's. Along with that, he would eventually be the first governor of Puerto Rico.

Juan Ponce de Leon may seem totally irrelevant to my ice cube sucking situation, but we are both victims to the same crime of identity by readership. Ponce de Leon, however, did not have the same power as myself. When I chose to write this piece about ice cube sucking[4] and the effect it will have on the reader in regards to myself, the writer, I also made the blatant decision to momentarily demote my existence to nothing more than what I write about. However, Ponce de Leon[5] did not decide that his history would be based around the Fountain of Youth, the thing he is most commonly known for now.

Rather, some dude named Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés wrote in 1535 in his book Historia general y natural de las Indias that Ponce[6] was looking for healing waters in Bimini, an area of the Bahamas. However, there's little evidence that I could find that he was actually looking for a physical youth-inducing fountain. More likely he was looking for the waters within a cove off the coast of the island. That cove was known to contain mineral-laden freshwater which could cure certain diseases. Reality has revealed that the cove's water contains high levels of calcium and magnesium that may have had positive effects on the body. Even if there were some truth in these stories, they were still written as stories. Yet somewhere along the line, they got printed in the 1600's textbooks as fact. Today, those "facts" are all Ponce de Leon is related to historically.

The point I'm trying to get at here doesn't really revolve around "fact." Instead, it is really related to the concept of written history and how the power dynamic between a reader and a writer is more powerful than existing "fact." Yet here I am, finishing this article, with yet another new ice cube placed into my mouth. This one too, did not get stuck on my tongue, or

to the side of my lips, in any fashion. It went smoothly into my mouth and now I am happily hydrating myself as I finish this article. So then I am left wondering, what is more powerful? The details I provided in the beginning, which portray myself as a man constantly sucking on ice cubes. Or is it the facts I provide later? It's interesting how the "facts" in this article evolved as it was written[7]. When it started off, the history was that I was a man constantly getting his tongue stuck on ice cubes and reflecting on it as far as you knew. Now though, we stand at the conclusion where I seem to have no problem doing the aforementioned task with no problem of them being stuck on my tongue. Although I suppose the second I put a new cube in my mouth next time and it gets stuck to my tongue, the truth changes once again.[8] The history is ever-evolving, but this piece places it in a frozen state[9] where like Ponce de Leon being forcibly associated with the Fountain of Youth because of vaguely placed facts in a textbook 400 years ago, all I can ever be associated with is my manic obsession with sucking ice cubes, writing about the act, and mildly relating it to the possibility that a man once maybe looked for the Fountain of Youth.

[1] It has always been very odd to me that the ice cubes in restaurants are shaped differently than any other ice cubes I've ever seen. A lot of time the ones in restaurants are circular like donuts, and I don't fully understand how they freeze them like that.

[2] This is one of those absolutely crazy phenomenons that gets overlooked how amazing it is. The explanation is also really quite simple to understand. My tongue has saliva on it, which is a liquid. Along with that, my tongue only has so much heat to it. The ice cube, being a super cold object, actually causes the saliva of the tongue to freeze, creating a frozen bridge between the tongue and the cube.

[3] I also have always had this strange notion, and I'm

not sure if there's any validity to it at all, that the tongue is less able-to-recover from injury than a normal body part. For example, if I get a small cut from a butter knife, I can rest easy knowing that after a few days with a band-aid, the cut will begin to seal, and my skin will be fine. Meanwhile, I have always had the strange fear that if I lose a bit of my tongue (even just a few cells!) that they will be gone forever. So, as a result, if I just pull an ice cube off my tongue like some kind of madman, I may end up pulling off bits of my tongue as well. If I did this enough and my fear turns out to carry some truth, that means eventually this method will result in the total destruction of my tongue's taste cells. Of course, I would still have teeth, so I suppose eating would be possible. In fact, as long as I still had access to saliva and the ability to swallow, this might actually not be a terrible thing. After all, without the burden of flavor, I could simply eat only the healthiest of foods available to me.

[4] Which has, admittedly, gone off the rails and seems to no longer be about sucking on ice cubes. However, I will make a promise here and now, that this article will end by somehow returning to the original topic.

[5] At this moment I went back and de-capitalized every usage of the "de" in his name. I realized that it isn't actually a middle name but rather just meaning "of Leon". I'm pretty sure I knew this in the back of my head, but at the moment I began writing this, it escaped my mind.

[6] I have decided we are on a first name basis.

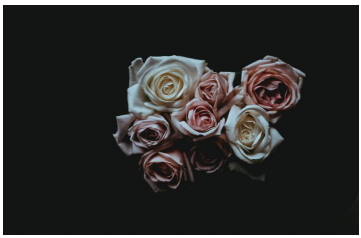
[7] Or as it was read for you I guess.

[8] But by that point, alas, the article will be published. Sadly, I don't think I will add addendums to edit the history each time I suck on a ice cube to resolve whether or not it got stuck to my tongue.

[9] Actually no pun intended.

The Good Place, Self-Improvement, and Where are We?

Issue #35 Portrait Mode
By: Helen



Warning: Spoilers abound

Frozen yogurt isn't that great. It's not amazing but it's not the worst. Still, every couple of months, I am called to a frozen yogurt joint via some type of dog whistle that no one else can hear, something inside me that says, "Hey. You love frozen yogurt. Remember?" And I schlep over and I swirl some ghastly combination of flavors into an oversized cup and I pour everything that looks good on top of it: mini M&Ms, pieces of Kit Kat, is that Reese's? Let's throw on a strawberry for good luck. Like a fool, I pay money, sit down, and eat half of it, and then I remember that I am not good at mixing flavors, I do not like frozen yogurt, and I am in fact lactose intolerant.

So the frozen yogurt thing should have been my first clue.

I'm assuming that you, reader, have already watched The Good Place and that's why you're here. If you haven't watched it then please, close this window and go to Netflix and watch it. Then come back. I'll even let you skip the frozen yogurt paragraph the second time.

The fact that more and more frozen yogurt spots are opening up throughout America, coupled with the realization that the Hellmouth is not in California but is actually situated beneath Washington, DC, and has been barfing out evil – and stupid – policy ever since it opened up on January 20, 2017, should be a clear indication that we are in the Bad Place.

We're not in the Medium Place. We're not in the Good Place. This is, definitely, the Bad Place, and we're stuck here until we die; at which point we will (insert your personal belief system re: the afterlife here).

So let's get to work! Eleanor decided to become a better person so she could belong in the Good Place. She decided that…a lot of times. And it's valid. And it drove her crazy. As the penultimate episode in this season pointed out, the motivation behind Chidi, Tahani, Eleanor, and Jason improving themselves was so that they could go to the Good Place. Which is great for them! (Except they probably will never make it to the Good Place because this is television but it's fine because the Good Place was the friends they made along the way and all that jazz).

But what about us? We're stuck down here where things are, decidedly, really hard, bad, ugly, and we keep on eating frozen yogurt even though we don't like it that much and we're lactose intolerant. Sure, we have Beyonce and John Mulaney and golden retrievers. We have camping and stars and the continual waves of the ocean. But for the foreseeable future, politically, culturally, and environmentally speaking, we're kind of stuck in the Bad Place. Being tortured by whatever the news cycle or the sky can whip up for us (hello, tornadoes, I respect you and am rightfully terrified of you). How do we find the motivation to be good people, study philosophy, create things, and help people on the side of the road whose cars have broken down when we're being slapped from all sides

with the reality that hey, if you stop for some guy on the side of the road he might rape you, all the movie stars you thought you loved are also rapists, and the President is a rapist too! What you thought was the Good Place is the Bad Place. Sure, we have Beyonce and John Mulaney and golden retrievers. We have camping and stars and the continual waves of the ocean. But for the foreseeable future, politically, culturally, and environmentally speaking, we're kind of stuck in the Bad Place. Being tortured by whatever the news cycle or the sky can whip up for us (hello, tornadoes, I respect you and am rightfully terrified of you). How do we find the motivation to be good people, study philosophy, create things, and help people on the side of the road whose cars have broken down when we're being slapped from all sides with the reality that hey, if you stop for some guy on the side of the road he might rape you, all the movie stars you thought you loved are also rapists, and the President is a rapist too!

What you thought was the Good Place is the Bad Place.

How in the face of all that do we pull our car over and take our chance being a good person? Is there even a point to self-improvement if you're already in the Bad Place? All white people are racist. Congratulations if you're a white person, you're racist. You can accept it and try to improve upon it and atone for something or everything – or you can refuse to reflect, improve, adapt.loved are also rapists, and the President is a rapist too! What you thought was the Good Place is the Bad Place.

How in the face of all that do we pull our car over and take our chance being a good person? Is there even a point to self-improvement if you're already in the Bad Place? All white people are racist. Congratulations if you're a white person, you're racist. You can accept it and try to improve upon it and atone for something or everything – or you can refuse to reflect, improve, adapt.

I think the key comes in the fact that we're all here together. All of us are in the Bad Place, maybe for whatever shit our former selves pulled one dimension over. I hope it was worth it. So we're here, stuck, and there's really no hope of ever being in the Good Place because even if we can turn the Bad Place into something better, it'll take generations and we might start by lifting a stone, slowly, but the cathedral won't be built until we're long dead and by that point we won't have a say in what god anyone prays to.won't have a say in what god anyone prays to.

As long as we're here, though, you can look to your right and left. Maybe somebody's been crushed by a stone a few feet away from you and if you hurry you can save their life. For the time being. Maybe behind you someone is thirsty and you have a full water bottle because you got lucky. You can go over and give them the water bottle so they won't be thirsty again for a few hours.

Maybe if that moves you enough you can attend a "free water for all" demonstration. You can draft up policy changes and present them to your local representatives. You can supervise water bottle handouts at key areas around the city to give to people as they go off to their cathedral-building, rock-lifting, life-making job where they will, futilely, build something that will hopefully improve everything but will most likely just keep the wheels turning for another generation.

If you don't feel like bringing babies into the Bad Place, adopt one. I'm serious. You can love anything that breathes and why not love something that's already breathing and needs someone to love in return? Give your leftovers to somebody on the street. Donate to a GoFundMe or seven. I don't know, it's your life.

I guess the whole point is, you're stuck in the Bad Place whether you feel you deserve it or not. What do we owe each other while we're

here? Maybe you're a Chidi and you're Just Trying Your Best. Maybe you're a Tahani and you got a rough lot in life and really can't be blamed. Maybe you're a Jason and you're just…not that smart. Maybe you're Eleanor and you've been a real, genuine dick.

No matter who you are, the answer to the question is always the same. I think we owe it to each other not to make the Bad Place any worse.

Anyway, watch The Good Place seasons 1 and 2 now streaming.

The Curious Case of Tommy Wiseau

Issue #36
Slobber Knocker
By: Esley

Many people have yet to experience the enigma that is the film The Room (2003). Today, any time I bring that film up I get asked, “is that the one with Brie Larson?” No. No, it is not. The Room tells a much darker story; one of love, friendship, and betrayal. More importantly, it tells the utterly bizarre story of a man: Tommy Wiseau.

Wiseau directed, wrote, produced, and starred in the film. The film was completely financed with his own money, as far as anyone knows. The Room is widely regarded as “the worst movie of all time.” Actor James Franco referred to it as “the Citizen Kane” of bad movies. And it is bad, it’s horrible, but to be completely honest I’ve seen The Room more than I’ve seen many good movies. It’s comically bad, every time I watch it there ’s something new that makes me bust out laughing. The laughs are certainly great but there is something else that always brings me back to this movie: the enormous amount of questions that come along with it.

Who is Tommy Wiseau? Where did he come from? How did he finance a $6 million production?

These are all questions that even science still cannot answer for certain. Wiseau, despite having a blatant European accent, claims to have been born and raised in New Orleans.

Wiseau's best friend and The Room co-star Greg Sestro claims in his book, The Disaster Artist: My Life Inside the Room, that Wiseau did live in New Orleans. Obituary records were found of his Aunt and Uncle Wieczor. They lived in Chalmette, LA., a small town outside of New Orleans. The name "Wiseau" is a combination of the French word for "bird" and Wieczor. Now, why include "bird" in his name? Rumor has it that Wiseau moved to San Francisco during his early adulthood. He sold bird toys to children in Fisherman's Wharf, a popular tourist destination. People there apparently called him "The Birdman." Suiting, because there is as much mystery surrounding him as an actual comic book hero, or villain. Hardcore Wiseau fans believe he is originally from Poland, based upon immigration records and the origin of the name Wieczor.

In terms of finances, Wiseau claims to have been some sort of real estate mogul. Sestro details Wiseau's explanation in his book but makes sure to tell the reader he doesn't believe the story entirely. The best conspiracy theory is that Tommy Wiseau is actually DB Cooper, the only plane hijacker that has ever managed to get away with it. Wiseau denies this, but you can never tell with that man. Another explanation is that Wiseau got the money in a settlement. He claims to have been involved in a terrible car accident, and that's what made him pursue his dreams of being in the film industry. Sestro also mentions that much of the crew thought that The Room was part of some larger money laundering scheme. The truth is, no one knows for sure.

There are many memes that came as a result of Tommy Wiseau's The Room. In fact, just last year, James Franco directed and produced a film based on Sestro's book, titled The Disaster Artist. Hollywood celebrities such as Dave Franco, Seth Rogan, Judd Apatow, and Nathan Fielder all had roles in the film. This just goes to show how well Wiseau captured

audiences with his strange persona. Sure, The Room is an unintentionally hilarious movie. But To be honest, it's more than that. The mystery always has me coming back, I always want to know more about Wiseau's life and upbringing. I think there are some people you look at and wonder "What's their story?" I get that vibe with Wiseau, only magnified about 100 times more.

If you haven't experienced The Room, I highly recommend it. From there, I guarantee you will see The Disaster Artist and read Sestro's book.

Link to the book: https://www.amazon.com/Disaster-Artist-Inside-Greatest-Movie/dp/1451661193

Why are SpongeBob Memes so Popular

Issue #37 Sex, Lies, and Catfish
By: Eric

There has always been a heavy presence of the Nickelodeon animated series SpongeBob SquarePants. It has been a mainstay on Nickelodeon and children's television for almost two decades, but ever since the beginning of memes in the mid-2000s, this yellow sponge has been a consistent mainstay. I should know, as someone who has shitposted online ever since I had access to the Internet. I remember the days when iconic quotes like "No, This is Patrick," and "CHOCOLATE!" were often uttered. I remember the days when Patrick had the spotlight with "Patrick Hates this Channel" and "Surprised Patrick" were everywhere. I remember the days when the Handsome Squidward episode came out, and his face populated Internet message boards the world over. Honestly, just about every episode from the first three seasons had some famous quote or gag associated with it.

But while other properties and franchises had died off, SpongeBob continued to grow and grow, to the point where just about every other month had a new meme. I remember it very vividly in 2015 with "Confused Mr. Krabs." 2016 would later see "Caveman Spongebob." 2017 saw "Mocking Spongebob." And in 2018, within just a few weeks, there are not one, not two, but three different Spongebob memes. "Evil Patrick," "Tired Sponge-

bob," and "Krusty Krab vs. Chum Bucket." You can't go through one scroll through your Twitter feed without seeing at least one of these pop up.

The question is, why exactly is this cartoon the one that continues to get new memes over and over again? Other cartoons and shows have gotten hit with memes in the past, including Nickelodeon programs like Jimmy Neutron and Drake & Josh, but SpongeBob is the only one that seems to have something fresh every couple of months. Is there a reason why Internet culture prioritizes this show above everything else?

It was while analyzing the show I came up with a few reasons. The main reason is that SpongeBob is probably the most recognizable cartoon since the Looney Tunes. It's become one of those rare shows where just about everybody has seen the show at least once, including people who don't even have kids. He's up there alongside Mickey and Bugs in recognition, which gives him universal appeal both as a show and as a deliverer of memes.

The show is so popular to the point that it has been Nickelodeon's #1 show pretty much since its inception, especially once the early 2000s rolled around. A 2009 post on the animation forum site ToonZone reveals that between 2005 to May 2009, the show has aired over 5,162.5 hours, which translates to about 97 hours a month within those time frames. Considering the channel has to share time between the Nick Jr. preschool block and the Nick @ Nite block, that only further emphasizes just how much SpongeBob has aired in just that time frame. Just one look at the Nickelodeon schedule shows that Spongebob has a clear dominance over all of the other shows the channel airs.

Outside of the show's popularity, there is a sick interest many have in taking something for kids, removing the innocence, and adding in raunchiness. It's the kind of

corruption that has also been found with the countless memes based off of the PBS Kids show Arthur. We as a culture love taking media intended for children and making it appealing towards adults. SpongeBob memes are not an exact replica of this idea, but the fact that the most popular brand in Hollywood cinema is Marvel, a comic books company which largely had its comic issues targeting young kids, is now something enjoyed by grown adults does say quite a bit in how we like taking the stuff for kids and morphing them into something that is appealing to twenty and thirtysomethings. The first generation of kids who watched Spongebob in its early era, from the beginning of the show to the first movie are the ones who were born into the Internet, are now grown up, and have experienced the show, making it something immensely appealing and relatable to a good chunk of people. After all, other kids shows from the early 2000s, like Ed, Edd n Eddy, and Drake & Josh have also been hit with the meme craze, so having the most popular kids show of that time period be such a huge part of Internet culture is understandable.

But perhaps the main reason as to why this show has gotten so much love amongst the denizens of the Internet is the fact that SpongeBob SquarePants was a proto-Internet. Every single episode was silly, crazy, frenetic, surreal, and stupid. Nautical nonsense, if you will. Those adjectives perfectly describe certain factions of the Internet. In between the breakthroughs it has created in terms of communication and the like, the Internet is full of silly, goofy, and weird areas. To some, it is idiotic and ridiculous, but to a specific group of dwellers, it is the perfect canvas to paint on. A place where the ridiculous and surreal can live on. A place where inside jokes and references are king. A place for people to call home. And the twentysomethings that call the Internet home called Bikini Bottom home when they were youngsters, only helping the show's influence

online.

There is an oddity towards the obsession of Sponge-Bob amongst those on the Internet, but since the show was a gateway to countless laughs online, I wouldn't have it any other way.

EVERY TIME MY FANNY PACK MADE A CAMEO ON INSTA

Issue #38 Toil & Trouble

By: Lana

…Or its alternative title, Fanny Packs are Cool, You Guys are Just Mean.

High fashion is something I've never really understood.

Now, don't get me wrong. I love cute clothes, dressing to impress, the works. I'm fascinated by the beauty of unique hairstyles and clothes paired with some statement jewelry. In high school, I spent hours poring over outfit combinations, debating on what to wear over the course of the week.

Fashion is always crossing boundaries. It's great, it's cool. And although I've undoubtedly gotten lazier as I've advanced in my college career, the appreciation for fashion is still there. Maybe on a good day you'll catch me in a dress; it's possible, albeit rare. Legend has it I wore heels to campus once.

Once.

But high fashion is an entirely new ballgame. It comes in all kinds of textiles, forms, and materials. Runway models are out here working on their Instagrams wearing clothes made of metal or glass, and the game is forever changed. Duct tape dresses, angel wings, sheer clothes that make it look like you're wearing nothing at all- and do not get me started on celebrity gala gowns. Lady Gaga once wore a dress made of meat; who does that?

TL;DR, I don't get it.

There's a disconnect there for me, a gap I've never

been able to bridge. When I see sweaters on the runway that look like they were thrown in the wash with six knives and a taser, I mentally clock out (I'm looking at you, Kanye). I've given up on trying to look good all the time. Who has the energy, especially when I have seven papers due each week?

So while I may no longer be the most fashion-forward person, I do have one thing to say: fanny packs are revolutionary.

Hear me out.

I was scrolling through my Instagram recently, reminiscing about summertime and study abroad because I'm drowning in assignments. As I reviewed my old posts, I realized something. In almost every photo from my time abroad, my fanny pack made a cameo.

It's hysterical. Fantastic, even. I had to count them, because I couldn't believe how many times it snuck into my "Instagram-worthy photos." The end count?

Twenty-two cameos. My fanny pack snuck into my pictures 22 times, and I either didn't notice, or didn't care. All because it was handy and adorable and saved my skin countless times. So if metal and duct tape dresses are high fashion and Instagram-worthy, as we all know they are, then so are fanny packs. Sorry, I don't make the rules. I just follow them.

Exhibit A: I went to Puerto Rico with my sister, and I broke out the good ol' pack for old times' sake.
See it? This one's an easy one.

Exhibit B: Still Puerto Rico, a

little bit more difficult to spot, because it's almost camou-

flaged.

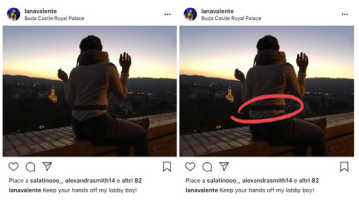
Now the game gets a little harder.

lanavalente
Buckingham Palace
Place a francesca.lola.v, salatinooo_ e altri 110
lanavalente Harry honey..... listen, you didn't need to go get engaged to Meghan, just come back home & we'll sort this out

Exhibit C: London, England. You sort of have to zoom in. There she is. She's beauty, she's grace, she sits upon

my waist.

Exhibit D: Seljalandsfoss,


lanavalente
Buda Castle Royal Palace
Place a salatinooo_, alexandrasmith14 e altri 82
lanavalente Keep your hands off my lobby boy!

Iceland.

Exhibit E: Budapest, Hungary.

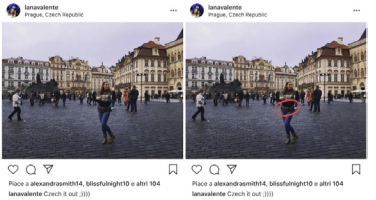


Exhibit F: Prague, Czech Republic.

Don't worry, you don't have to search through 22 photos for my fanny pack, I know you've had enough by now- but the list goes on and on. And you'd think the presence of the bag would ruin the photo, or just look really dumb, but honestly? It enhances them. Not only is it a fun I-Spy game, but a reminder of my experiences.

That bag contained all of my personal documents: my license, my passport, and every penny to my name was shoved into that little pack on my person. My fanny pack knows more about me than I know myself- it's where I held my most important possessions and knows what I value in turn. It's seen all the things I've seen, although perhaps from a different perspective- say, the underside

of a mattress in Prague- and it made me feel safe. Who says a wardrobe staple can't be handy as well?

That fanny pack probably saved me from would-be pickpockets, lost documentation, and my own forgetfulness. One too many friends had their phones stolen from their pocket for me to risk not wearing it.

But do I need to explain my reasoning for why I wanted to wear a damn fanny pack? No, I don't.

"So what?" You may ask. "What's the point? Did you bring us here just to flex your Instagram photos?"

No, reader. I did not. The point is, no matter what people say about what you wear, or the stigma surrounding a particular article of clothing (Crocs, fanny packs, you know what I'm talking about), it's important to be you. And yeah, it might sound cheesy and overdone, but it's the truth, and sometimes you need to be reminded.

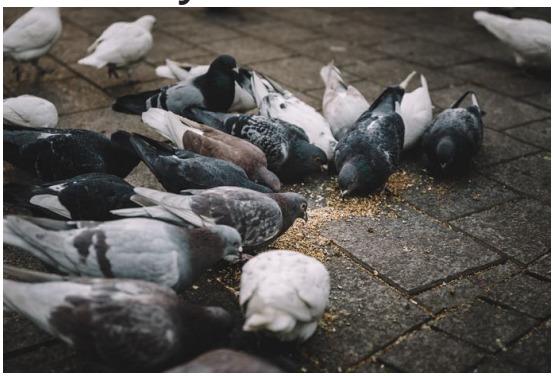
It's a lesson in genuinity. By the end of my study abroad experience, I wore my fanny pack proudly. There's a deeper meaning here: be yourself, who cares? You are you, and we are adults, and anybody who has time to boo and harass you for your outfit choices, of all things… They're not people you want to associate with in the first place.

There's a larger discussion at hand when it comes to passing judgment on people, whether it be about your clothes or more serious issues, such as sexuality, gender identity, race, etc. My intention is not to trivialize these problems by comparing them to clothing choices- but whatever the case, it's important to remember that this same concept applies to everything: be you.

I know, I spurred you on with promises of fanny pack fantasies, but instead you got a life lesson. The moral of the story? Be yourself, and take pride in it. There's no one out there like you.

In Defense of the Pigeon

Issue #39 Birds of a Feather
By: Kristen



In 2009, I uploaded a 5 minute video to YouTube where I made a digital painting of a pigeon, accompanied by a poignant “sad violin song.” My devotion to this gray feathered creature is forever documented in film.

Yet, as a native New Yorker, when I tell people that pigeons are my favorite bird, they look at me like I just knocked an ice cream cone out of their hand.

“But why?” are often the first words out of their grimaced mouths.

No amount of impassioned defending ever does the trick in those scenarios, and it gets a little tiring. How nice it would be to just point to a written record of my argument:

“But why?” they ask,

“Please refer to my published article on the matter,” I’d reply, dropping the mic as I exit.

This will rarely happen, if ever, but if it does I am prepared. You bet it’ll be the pinnacle of my whole life, just like the pigeon is the pinnacle of the avian world.

Acknowledge Your Hypocrisy

"As a wedding gift, I'll crap all over your $1500 dress. For good luck and fertility, of course."

This one goes all the way to the top – there's a huge problem just in our perception of what a pigeon is. You know doves? Those beautiful little birds they release in droves at select overly expensive weddings?

Sit down for this one. Scientifically, doves are just smaller, white pigeons. They aren't different species whatsoever.

The way we view doves throughout history has been consistently positive. They're the bird of peace, and I guess you could also argue bath products (Side note: but did you know Dove also makes chocolate? How do you go from shampoo to chocolate, of all things?).

Doves have been used as religious symbols in ancient history, representing the goddess Inanna-Ishtar in Mesopotamia and the goddess Asherah in Levant. Doves became known as the "bird of peace" in the first place due to their role in both the Hebrew and Christian Bibles.

When there's literally no difference between the birds besides the color of their

Is it too late to take it back?

feathers, it seems appropriate the the pigeon should also represent all of these things. Yet, while doves are birds of peace, pigeons are feather rats, gutter birds. I'm sure Inanna-Ishtar and Asherah aren't too thrilled about those terms.

A History of Service

Outside of their symbolic nature, pigeons also have a long and dedicated history of practical use, primarily for military purposes.

In World War II, the Dickin Medal could be awarded to animals to honor their service, and guess which bird is a thirty-two-time recipient. Yeah, you read that right – 32 pigeons have received a medal for saving lives during times of war. Even the very first three instances of this award were granted to pigeons.

G.I. Joe the Pigeon saved whole village of people from air strikes. What has your action figure done, hun?

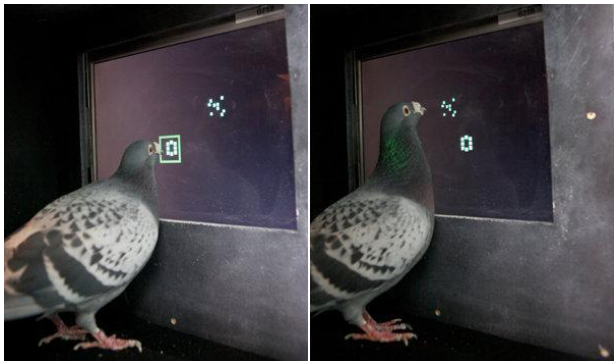
Pigeons haven't just won awards meant for animals though – they've won medals primarily meant for people. In 1918, the French homing pigeon Cher Ami won the Croix de Guerre Medal for successfully relaying a message despite life-threatening injuries in World War I, and is now preserved in the Smithsonian Institute.

Generally, an Excellent Bird

Since you can find pigeons in massive groups all over the world, you might be inclined to view them as an infectious pest. I get it, I do. It's hard to see pigeons as beneficial when they're snacking on a discarded two-day old Big Mac. Nonetheless, that doesn't make the viewpoint any less incorrect.

Pigeons are actually beneficial for the environments they inhabit, as their sparse, temporary nests can be made almost anywhere, out of pretty much anything. Similarly, they're opportunistic feeders – meaning they can live off human scraps that other, native birds cannot.

Outside of being hardworking and environmentally friendly, pigeons are also



I just had an existential crisis at the realization that pigeons *are proba-*

really freaking smart. They recognize their own reflection better than 3-year old human children, and are even capable of completing abstract math problems. Given their decorated military history, their intelligence isn't very surprising.

Basically, pigeons are just out here hustling. They're trying to make it in the big city, which, aren't we all? Unlike the rest of us, though, these birds have the added benefits of being fearless, confident, and, well – flying.

Since I'm 100% confident that these facts have successfully converted you into a through-and-through pigeon fan like myself today, I'll see you around at The American Pigeon Museum.

Further Reading for the Born-Again Pigeon Enthusiast:

https://thisgreatplanet.wordpress.com/2011/06/27/in-defense-of-pigeons/

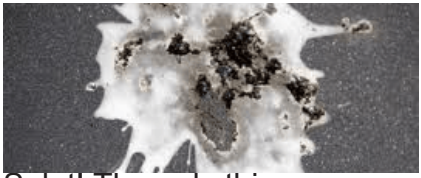
https://bklyner.com/in-defense-of-pigeons-benson-hurst/

https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/the-american-pigeon-museum-oklahoma-city-oklahoma

In Defense of Anything But The Pigeon

Issue #39 Birds of a Feather

By: Allora



Splat! The only thing worse than getting pooped on by a bird is getting pooped on by a pigeon. The flocks of grey and white sky rats always end in doom– globs of white and brown that stick to everything. But poop is not the reason I detest the feathered fiends so much. Rather, it is because of their innate ability to ruin basically everything.

I will never forget the day I was attacked by a pigeon. It was the summer of 2004, and I had just turned six. My family was at the Bicentennial Tower in Erie, Pennsylvania. We were just enjoying the day and looking for those weird frog statues. There I was, minding my own business and eating a PB&J that my mom made me when BAM! I was bombarded. A flurry of feathers. After some screaming, and one missing sandwich, I

was completely turned off of pigeons.

My hatred for these beasts does not end there. Oh, no. It goes way deeper than that. So without further ado, here are just a few reasons why pigeons are the Worst.

"Sky Rat" is a Compliment

Let's compare the common pigeon to any other animal around, shall we?

1. Other birds

I like birds. They're fascinating to me, so do not think that is why I dislike pigeons. Flight is such an incredible power, and these animals are equipped with it. They often have beautiful colors and patterns decorating their bodies. Their songs are like music (sometimes.) How could you hate them?

I don't. I just hate pigeons. They might be fairly smart, with brains that work a bit like ours, but so are crows, parrots, ravens, cockatoos, macaws, etc. In fact, they did not even make the list of most intelligent birds.

If birds evolved from dinosaurs as paleontology suggests, I would assume pigeons evolved from the most inconvenient species. They were probably the dinosaurs that flooded the earth with poop and dinosaur trash. Nothing special.

2. Rats

Don't even get me started on rats! As a rat owner, I have so much respect for their intelligence and loyalty. Calling pigeons sky rats is a compliment to pigeons and an insult to rats. I will very passionately argue this at any time, anywhere.

First off, rats are infinitely cuter and more lovable than pigeons. Their noses are adorable and can detect so much more than any human or bird. Did you know that 1 out of every 100 genes in a rat's DNA is involved with olfactory processes? Insane, I know.

Rat noses are more than just

cute, though. In Cambodia, large rats are used to sniff out bombs. They are light enough to step on landmines without detonating them, and their cute noses are so powerful that they can smell the mine underground. These rats are trained to walk on leads around open fields and

alert the humans of explosives below.

3. Dogs/cats

I think anyone would choose a dog or a cat over a pigeon any day. Our furry friends are lifelong pals, and we form genuine, loyal bonds with them. They have our hearts and our best interest in mind.

Service dogs save lives every single day. Emotional support cats comfort and calm people. Sure, pigeons can do math, but they can't cuddle up to me during a thunderstorm, now can they?

Trash Eaters

People find their trash bags ripped open from a night of raccoon fun and get angry, but people also walk by papers, wrappers, and scraps of food on the street and never say anything. Obviously, people are at fault for leaving the litter, but pigeons do not help. At all.

They use their gift of flight to take scraps from the ground and spread them willy-nilly around the area. They don't care. Whatever they need for a nest or food or whatnot, they snatch. The rest is strewn throughout the streets

just like their poop. Filthy creatures.

Color Scheme(rs)

If I could sum up a pigeon's appearance in one word:

ugly. Their muted, dull colors make them blend into the dull, dirty streets and smoke of the city. They often look like they have not bathed themselves in years, and they walk funny. Sometimes you get lucky and see the purple-ish green shiny feathers on the necks/chests of some, but for the most part, they're just not pretty birds.

Have you ever seen a Ma-

caw?
A bird of paradise?

Even cardinals and blue jays (which are also everywhere in my area) are prettier.

Pigeons really have nothing going for them in the looks department, or any other department for that matter.

The Albatross' Snack

Many different types of birds have been and are considered symbols in nature. But if we are talking about birds as symbols, let's mention cool birds. Doves (pretty pigeons) might be birds of peace and represent goddesses, but they are no Albatross. These gigantic birds are fascinating to see and can represent good luck at sea. However, kill one and you just might be the one killed at sea. Imagine having the power to bring both luck and misfortune. Not to mention, they make a great Fleetwood Mac song.

That is not all though, here are some other symbolic birds that are better than pigeons in every facet of life.

(https://mysticurious.com/bird-symbolism-their-meanings)

Sparrows-companionship
Canary-joy
Red cardinal- beauty, nobility
Crow-sacred law, truth
And finally the eagle- (a better bird of) peace

So basically, pigeons are not beautiful, useful, clean, or all that important. I generally have adverse feelings for things that just get in the way, and these creatures are no exception. It may have been my pigeon trauma, but there is no convincing me otherwise: pigeons are useless.

If you disagree and want to read the other side of this argument, check out In Defense of the Pigeon!

This Is
M I C H A E L

Issue #40 The Cozy Issue
Produced By Allie Nye

In the final installment of her ‘This Is’ Series, Allie interviews her friend Michael who was born in Zimbabwe but currently calls Brisbane, Australia home.

Note from the Editor: This is a video. To view, download the Artivive app and scan the picture above!

I Really Love My Led

Issue #41 Roses Are Red
By: Paulie

It's the first day of my spring semester. I arrive at my Russian history class, eager to learn about the country's history from Rasputin to Vladimir Putin. I walk into the classroom and grab a seat at the front of the room. I place down my brand new Jansport backpack and pull out a fresh, crisp marble notebook. I open up the book to it's first page and stare with the wide eyes of a meerkat, excited to explore new plains.

Then something changes, and I realize I've made a mistake.

I freeze, my expression changing from naively animated to distraught.

I've forgotten the most important tool for taking notes: my writing utensil.

My comfort becomes stress. I'm doomed. How will I ever take notes in this class, my first class, without my signature writing pencil?!

It's 12:17. I only have 3 minutes before the class begins at 12:20. In a panic, I scan the room. Most people are on

laptops. They won't give me pencils.

Then my friend Rylee enters the classroom. The game has changed. She grabs the open seat next to me.

"Rylee, I forgot a pencil."

"Here, you can use this."

Rylee gives me a utensil from her backpack. I smile, my chest full of gratitude, until I see it.

It's a goddamned purple Bic pen.

PURPLE? Look, I'm a pretty liberal guy, but using a purple pen in my new notebook on the first day of class just seems like an avant garde invitation to chaos for the rest of the semester.

"I can't use this, are you insane?"

She takes the pen and puts it away, seemingly offended. How is she insulted? I'm the one who almost had to put purple ink in my brand new marble notebook! Honestly, I should have moved seats after that disgraceful attempt at kindness. You can't trust anyone, nowadays.
While I was lamenting over the purple pen, two minutes ticked by. It's now 12:19, one minute until class starts. There I sat, still without a writing utensil, woefully unprepared. Like our founding fathers under the reign of King George, I was left without a tool to voice my thoughts.

Then, like an angel, a young woman next to Rylee and myself heard my quarrels with Rylee and offered me a pen. A black Bic pen.

Thanks to this black pen, I was able to take reasonable notes. However, the truth is, after the class, I had no choice but to rip the page out of my notebook. See, while a black Bic pen is a decent writing tool, there is only one tool truly fit for taking notes: the Ticonderoga #2 pencil.

I have tried quite a few different brands of pencils in my day. While they all have their own individual merits, every

single brand has a plethora of problems: Valiant, for example, has a decent writing stroke, but it's a circular shape, which totally distorts the hand. Its eraser is mediocre at best; Dixon is just a poor man's Bic; Bic's lead sharpens in that weird way where one side of the skin always takes over the lead; and Office Depot… Office Depot is fine, I guess. Still, if you're using Office Depot, you're probably also the type of person who gets a plain vanilla soft serve and then throws the cone away without even taking a bite.

Now, before I get into why the Ticonderoga is the only pencil that truly exemplifies beauty in the form of lead, I have to address the dysfunctional elephant in the room: lead pencils. Lead pencils are not real pencils. They're a terminator-esque horrid creation meant to take away all the natural aspects of our lives. Along with that, you have to buy the lead to refill your lead pencils! I don't exactly know how, but I'm positive there's a pyramid scheme there. Anyway, if you use lead pencils, you are supporting the mechanization of our human species and I hope you rust in hell with Elon Musk's robot maid.

What is it that separates the Ticonderoga from all these other #2 monstrosities, you ask? Nothing, really. The amazing thing about the Ticonderoga is that it just does everything right! All these other pencils have errors where the Ticonderoga simply does not. Its lead is strong. It sharpens in a perfect cone, creating longevity and a strong stroke. Its eraser actually erases your words. Its hexagonal structure actually makes me want to take geometry classes again.

As a bonus, it's a shade of yellow that doesn't make you want to puke.

When I write with the Ticonderoga, I'm not frustrated at my pencil's tip or rotating it to try and get my "e"s to have the perfect curve. Rather, I'm simply writing. My pencil is not a hindrance. It is my sword, and I am King Arthur.

HIYA!

To bring this tale full circle, I went to another class, armed with my weapon of choice – the Ticonderoga. A young woman approached me and asked if she could borrow a pen or pencil.

I looked her dead in the eye. She looked… Afraid. Her mouth was asking a simple question, but her soul was looking for something more. So, I reached into my backpack and pulled out a crisp, new, sharpened Ticonderoga.

“Here you go.”

“Thanks.”

She kept it cool, but I could tell when she grabbed that Ticonderoga her entire life spirit was revitalized. She knew truth where before she knew only nothingness. I smirked, satisfied with pushing my Ticonderoga agenda.

As the class went on, I watched her write smooth “b”s and powerful “l”s. When class was dismissed, in the rush of our lives, I suppose both of us forgot to take care of the pencil-returning process. She left, probably to hoard that pencil forever.

But it’s okay. Because the Ticonderoga isn’t about selfishness, or pressure. It’s about generosity and helping each other out, in the simplest, yet most perfect way possible. So she can keep that Ticonderoga #2 pencil. Because she deserves it. We all deserve it. In fact, we all might need it.

I am NOT sponsored by Ticonderoga. I am sponsored by the raw love of good handwriting powered by a strong pencil. Who among us hasn’t needed an extra hand every now or then? Next time you find yourself in need, go to Staples, or 7/11, or whatever store sells pencils, and grab a pack of Ticonderogas. Sharpen those babes, and BOOM, you’re revving your engine. This is more than a simple appraisal for pencils. This is a call to action. Do you want to be a lawyer? GO grab your Ticonderoga and study. Then sharpen it again

and go take your LSAT! The time for action is now.

Considering ordering expensive food? NO! Go grab a sticky note and write a shopping list, get the food, and make yourself a healthy meal. Worried about death as we must someday all face it and the great unknown? Well, what are you waiting for? Go write your will! Leave your Ticonderogas to somebody you care about. Be your best self, and write your best as well.

I love you.

Garden of the Gods

Issue #42 God Tier
By: Savannah

Denver may be known as the mile high city, with mountains that touch the heavens. And outside Denver is a park fit for a god, hence the name “Garden of the Gods.” Garden of the Gods Park is in Colorado Springs and is known for it’s beautiful and ancient sandstone formations. The backdrop of the orange and red stones are the snow-capped Rocky Mountains.

Garden of the Gods expands over 1,300 acres and has mountains of sandstone up to 300 ft tall. It is a major tourist attraction and is one of the most photographed places near Denver. There are 15 miles of trails to hike, from easy strolls to more challenging rock scrambles. It is an extremely popular place for rock climbers and they have trips through the visitor centers. There are also plenty of trails for mountain bikers and horseback climbers. It is easy for any tourist to enjoy, the ones who want a physical challenge and those who want to drive the loop in a car and just enjoy the scenery.

The visitor center contains plenty of exhibits, educating visitors on the geology of the rock formations and some of the wildlife that lives on the land. There is also exhibit on

the dinosaur “Theiophytalia kerri”. The fossil was discovered in Garden of the Gods

in 2008, and the exhibit has been a proud addition since then. The visitors center also contains a gift shop and a cafe, with a view that looks out over the park.

This park is unique for many reasons, and one is the name. It gained the name in the 1850’s, when surveyors from Denver came out to the area. This is what the park’s website says about this day, “M. S. Beach, […] suggested that it would be a ‘capital place for a beer garden’ when the country grew up. His companion, Rufus Cable, a ‘young and poetic man’, exclaimed, ‘Beer Garden! Why it is a fit place for the Gods to assemble. We will call it the Garden of the Gods.’”

The name stuck, and was made official when the land became a park.

I visited the park in the middle of June 2018. It was typical June Colorado weather, about 70-80 degrees and no humidity.

Since my dad grew up in Denver, I had been hearing about this park for years. I had been to Colorado before and had been up in the mountains, but never to Garden of the Gods. I don’t know what I was expecting, but my visit to the park surpassed any expectations I did have. The red of the sandstone matched with the green bushes and forest covered Rockies behind was beautiful. It was two environments I didn’t think i would ever see paired.

I have seen grasslands and forests, and I have seen sandstone in the desert but never imagined that the two could pair so seamlessly. The product is breathtaking.

When I went, my family decided to just drive the loop. We did not have nearly as much time as I would have liked to spend there, so we drove around, stopped at the major views and explored a little bit.

At a few places, I did get to wander off and climb up to see some of the views. A red ground covered in green bushes and cacti spread out before me until it turned into towering mountains, their peaks covered in snow or hidden by clouds.

One of the things I was most fascinated by was the rock formations. The differing colors in the stone and the clear layers are beautiful. I've always found it super interesting how much you can tell by the colors of the rock layers, and how they formed.

Garden of the Gods definitely had a few fascinating formations, including a boulder that seemed to balance on a perfectly on a much smaller rock. This rock was a major tourist stop, everyone wanted to pose underneath the giant rock. I may have also given into that tourist trend.

Though I didn't get to hike

the trails, I am so happy that I got to experience this park. There are many parks in the Denver area, and it can seem overwhelming to choose one which ones to visit but Garden of the Gods is truly worth it. It is breath-takingly beautiful and the geological history is fascinating. I mean, a dinosaur was found there. If that's not incentive enough, then go to gape at the daring and skill of the rock climbers or take in the nature. I hope to be able to go back soon so that I can spend a whole day walking the land fit for a god.

I Stopped Lying to Myself

Issue #43 Singing in the Shower

By: Kenzie

Warning: This piece discusses suicidal ideation and mental illness

It's been 375 days since I hit rock bottom. On April 9th, 2018, I considered suicide for the second time in my life. For reference, I wrote a precursor to this piece, Stop Lying to Yourself, which overviews my history with suicidal ideation. My goal in writing this is not to say that I'm totally out of the woods. I know that I'll have to deal with mental illness for the rest of my life. It's going to be an uphill battle that requires consistent effort. But instead of living in constant fear of my own mind, I've chosen to accept what I can never change—that my flaws are a part of the climb.

In the early afternoon of April 9th, I saw a counselor on my college campus for the first time, as friends and family of mine were growing concerned about my mental health. Though I didn't make anyone fully aware of how deep my downward spiral was, I promised that I'd try to get help. After talking through the sheer terror and hopelessness that my suicidal ideation was causing, the counselor determined that I was a danger to myself. She escorted me to a local emergency room.

In the first paragraph of

Stop Lying to Yourself I said, "There is nothing I hate more than letting down the people I love." This was and still is true, but my definition of "letting people down" has changed. I've come to understand that in order to tackle mental illness effectively, I must put myself first. The only way I could ever truly let my loved ones down is by losing the newfound respect I have for myself. As the saying goes, self-love isn't selfish.

After being poked and prodded by nurses, doctors, and crisis workers for nearly seven hours, I was transferred to an inpatient psychiatric hospital in Philadelphia. Feeling like a 19-year-old lab rat, I was trapped within the same confines and under constant surveillance for five agonizing days. Quickly stripped of technology, clothing with drawstrings or laces, and even the ability to use forks, I was no longer a daughter, a sister, a friend, or a student. To the hospital staff, I was nothing more than a flight risk. To myself? I was an empty void, a woman I couldn't recognize no matter how hard I tried. Utterly exhausted, I slept for 16 hours straight before reawakening in hell.

I've been restless for as long as I can remember. Whether I was refusing naps as a toddler or sneaking under the covers with a book and a flashlight in elementary school, it's clear that sleep was never a priority of mine. As terrible as my hospitalization was, it taught me how to slow down. After devoting years of my life to running around like Usain Bolt on a hamster wheel—to classes, swim practices, multiple jobs, musical rehearsals, and club meetings, all while trying to remain sane, it's no wonder that I passed out as soon as my head hit the run-down pillow I was given. Upon returning to school, I

learned how to manage my time more wisely. I began resting whenever my body needed it and stopped staying up all night to complete course assignments. Not being so burnt out led to an increase in the hours of sleep I was getting per night, less unnecessary stress, and higher rates of productivity. These skills have become a part of my daily routine and have worked wonders for my mental health.

It was during my second night at the hospital, while staring at the barren, white walls within, that my intrusive thoughts changed their tune. I came to realize that if I didn't or seemingly couldn't fight for my own sake, I had to for my parents. For my brother and sister. For my friends and teammates who gave a shit. I was far from the pathetic person I had made myself out to be. My heart was capable of dominating my warped mind, I just had to prove it to my toughest critic…myself.

When Stop Lying to Yourself was published, I'd only been out of the hospital for two weeks. In order to cope, I numbed myself, acted as if my stint in the psychiatric ward was a farce. If people asked questions? I'd tell them that there had been an emergency in my family. I wasn't ready to face my trauma yet, so I repressed it. No surprise here, but this was not healthy. Having no idea where life was headed, I pushed through the end of spring semester and returned home.

This past summer was transformative for me in more ways than one. I got in a car accident, and though no one was seriously injured, I was reminded of how fragile a human life is. My car was destroyed, but I wasn't. My heart pulsed at 1,000,000 beats per minute, but it remained safe in my chest.

This experience gave me the strength to remove toxic people from my life, because, in all honesty, they didn't deserve to be a part of it. I hold no resentment towards these individuals, that would be a waste of time. Rather,

I've accepted the fact that they only came into my life to show me what I didn't need. Through reconnecting with some old friends, one of whom has since become my significant other, I've experienced love, support, and kindness like I've never known.

But the most important part of those 3 months? I learned to love the woman I am, flaws and all, by taking care of myself.

I've learned more about myself in the past year than ever before, but life hasn't become a walk in the park. As I said earlier, it's been an uphill battle. My mental health ebbs and flows and it will never be perfect. I still have my fair share of sleepless nights, anxiety attacks, and depressive episodes that leave me bedridden. But, ultimately, I'm beyond proud of myself for the progress I've made and will continue to make. I'm continually thankful for my amazing support system.

The best part about hitting rock bottom? To escape it,

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8255

Why Does This Exist: The Queen's Corgi

Issue #44 Sorry, Not Sorry
By: Eric

It's important for kids to be aware about politics and political systems. It helps them become more aware about the world around them and helps them learn things aren't black and white and it seems some producer in Belgium was interested in educating kids about the British monarchy, leading to The Queen's Corgi.

Directed by Ben Stassen and animated by nWave Studios, best known for Fly Me to the Moon and A Turtle's Tale, this animated film is a curious one. Kids do like talking dog movies, but does the inclusion of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip really get kids excited to check it out compared to other talking dog movies? In fact, Her Majesty just lost her last corgi about a year ago, so this whole venture had some of the worst release timing ever.

Regardless, when I first saw the initial teaser trailer, largely consisting of dogs running around and acting cute, I didn't really think much of it. It looked like something that would appeal exclusively to five-year-olds but was still a harmless enough feature film that would be effective enough background noise.

There, I said it. I saw this image. Pictures

Right then and there, my curiosity was piqued. The fact that a movie that seemed designed for preschoolers featured U.S. president Donald Trump, and was voiced by Kirk Thornton, best known as the current voice of Shadow the Hedgehog, just meant that I had to see the film for myself and it's easy to say that The Queen's Corgi was quite an experience.

Even taking Trump out of the equation, the film is one of the strangest kids' movies to come out in a long time, with a slew of sexual innuendos, implied assault, and even pole dancing thrown in for good measure.

While the initial film starts out pleasant and sweet, Trump's appearance is where everything starts to fall apart. Fitting, I know. Never mind the fact that he says "cheesesteak" while taking selfies, as if he somehow has the prestige to name such a tasty Philadelphian treat, the only reason he appears is because he wants his pet corgi Mitzi (who is not real by the way. Trump doesn't even like dogs) to breed with one of Her Majesty's corgis.

Already things start to get weird. As Mitzi starts to get the hots for Rex, the lead dog of the film, the film goes into a dramatic turn. Beforehand, Trump literally says to his dog "grab some puppy." Ignoring for a couple seconds the fact that the filmmakers seriously thought that referencing the President's past assault history in a kids film was a good idea, Mitzi actually ends up following in his owner's footsteps.

The American dog soon finds herself chasing Rex, wanting to hook up without consent while poor Rex is forced to run and hide. As much as I appreciate a film that brings up the serious issue of male harassment and rape victims, this isn't really

the film that needs this kind of messaging. If anything, it just makes the film more uncomfortable to sit through. Especially when you have such conversations in this sequence like this:

“What part of ‘no’ don’t you understand?”
“The ‘N’ and the ‘O’!”

After that bizarre sequence, which ends with Trump getting bitten in the nether regions, the film continues with weird sexual humor. The Queen’s Corgi follows the simple template of “lost dog finds his way home”, but when he finds himself trapped in a dog pound, without his collar and nobody knowing who he is, things start to get very bizarre.

Not only does the pound have a literal fight club, referencing the movie of the same name, despite no kid having ever seen it, it is where the audience is introduced to Rex’s love interest, Wanda. Not only does Wanda appear strutting onto the stage with her own musical number, but it literally ends with her dancing on a pole. Not making a word of that up and wouldn’t you know it, Wanda only starts to fall for Rex when she finds out he’s royalty. Great.

Included with those wholesome family jokes are a couple of transphobic jokes, and pop culture references. Not even spoofing or making fun of them, just a dog referencing The Hunger Games or Rocky. It really makes me question the target audience for The Queen’s Corgi.

In spite of all the weird adult content thrown in, the story is too predictable and slow to grab the attention of anyone over the age of eight, and the film’s way too inappropriate for young kids. Even for people who like seeing Trump’s balls get busted, you already have cable news and late night TV to get your fix there.

But I guess I wouldn’t be talking about this movie if Trump or pole-dancing wasn’t featured, so I guess if the filmmakers wanted something for people to talk about, then job well done.

An Ode To Dollar Dog Night

Issue #45 Bite Me

By: Ben

A crucial part of being a Philadelphian is an essential, obsessive, life-threatening reliance on the results of Philadelphia sports teams and their performance. And part of that experience is an obligatory, semi-annual pilgrimage to South Philadelphia to watch it all unfold. It can be a semi-religious experience and a true foray into the positives (and, admittedly, negative) of the experience – one small part of collective consciousness. There's only one, extreme, major problem: it is ridiculously expensive nowadays. During the throes of a historically losing season of Sixers basketball, the tickets would hit single digits the day of a game, but now? All 41 home games will kill the checking account. The 8 Eagles home games will do you in way worse. That's bad enough, but you really feel your soul leave your body when you swipe the card to eat at halftime. A very solid $12 slice of pizza and $14 beer makes you regret every time you ever spent a dime in your life. There is only one beautiful, wonderful, massive saving grace.

Photo by Larry Bridges on Unsplash

Dollar.
Dog.
Night.

Let me tell you. Dollar Dog Night has saved my ass more times than a donkey veterinarian. It's nuts. It's angelic. I have eaten nothing short of a shameful amount of Dollar Dogs in my lifetime. It's the difference between taking out an extra mortgage and checking the couch for quarters. It's the difference between taking a mid-priced Uber home and having to walk 8 hours. It is the life-saving grace of every broke Philadelphian who can't manage to value their financial security more than some big boys in green. Dollar Dog Night IS Philadelphia. It's what we want. It's what we need. I dream of a world where every night, I can spend less than $10 and disgust myself with my newest hot-dog-based rock bottom. It's an experience that can't be replicated. It's the one night where every person in the arena, no matter how many zeroes are on their paycheck, is full, happy, and satisfied. It's a night that turns the (allegedly) hostile Philadelphia crowd into spectators of the opera. It's like three United Nations mixed with two hundred rainbows and uh, a lot of pigs. There is nothing more pure in this world. 30 Rock's Tracy Jordan once said to "Live every week like it's Shark Week." I want to challenge every person in Philadelphia to live every night like it's Dollar Dog Night.

Photo by Tiara Aracama on Unsplash

Dollar Dog Night, I Love You.

Photo by Caleb Oquendo from Pexels

IN CONVERSATION:

David Hogg & March for Our Lives

Issue #46 Thanks for Nothin'

By: Allie, Allora, Kate, & Rosa

In October Kate and Allie had to opportunity to interview gun control activist, David Hogg. Today, they sit down for a podcast with Rosa and Allora to discuss the interview, thoughts on gun control, and the importance of voting.

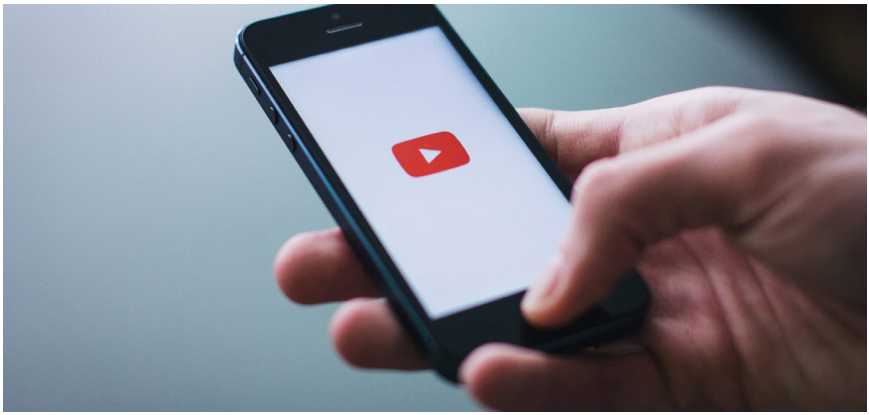
Note from the Editor: This is a video. To view, download the Artivive app and scan the picture above!

Visit marchforourlives.com to learn more about the cause and how you can join the fight.

Being told I'm doing a "good job" for walking around campus, that I'm "overcoming" and I don't let my disability "define me" or "stop me" makes me feel far from empowered. It's just a constant reminder that I'm considered to be "other," that the value of my life is inherently lower and that value is decided by abled people who view me as a charity case rather than a human being. Do I hate waking up every day in pain? Yes. Do I hate the constant risk of breaking a bone? Yes. But that doesn't mean that I am to be pitied. It means that this physical landscape I live in, one that constantly works against me, has to change.

Youtube Subliminals Are Damn Wacky

Issue #48 Sub-Zero
By: Belle



Have you ever wanted to dye your hair a different color but didn't want to leave your house or to spend any money or to put in any effort? Have you ever wanted clear skin without that pesky face wash? Have you ever wanted to look like Goku from Dragon Ball-Z?

You'll find your solutions in YouTube subliminals!

YouTube subliminals are videos that are used to make people into the desired person the viewer wants to be in virtually any way. They insert audio that is so low you can't hear it with the purpose of slipping the message into your subconscious. This is supposed to get your brain to actually listen to the message to make you into whatever the video says. These subliminal messages are usually like "I am now growing blonde hair" or "Genes do not control me, I control my genes". These sorts of messages are supposed to make your brain go "huh, I guess I

am growing blonde hair!" and boom, after a few listens, you've got beautiful blonde hair! Easy as that!

But here's the catch: there is absolutely no way that they work.

Now, there are some just for stuff such as increased confidence and general mental well-being, which might work for some people (I don't know, I took AP Psych two years ago and I wasn't very good at it, so my knowledge of how the brain works is abysmal). But when it comes to trying to get clicks from people's insecurities by promising to have a smaller waist or bigger ass or whatever, I begin to really doubt things. I looked a bunch up to see what people were promising they could do to other people through these videos. A lot of them were like "~look like sexy Instagram girl overnight~" or "I'VE NEVER MADE SOMETHING THIS POWERFUL… get tall in three days". One really caught my eye: GET EXTREMELY TALLER IN 10 MINUTES!

To test my theory that these were pretty much nonsense, I got my roommate—definitely one of my shorter friends—to try this subliminal out. I measured her before she listened and got a total of 5"1'. After 10 minutes was up, we measured her again to find that she was still 5"1'. Unfortunately for her and her lack of height, it was just as I expected. The video description did say "Listen 3-6 times a day for better results", but there was no way I was going to put her through that.

I noticed some strange ones that made people look like certain celebrities. I found one to make you look like The Rock (just shave your head instead), a lot to make you look like K-Pop stars, and even one to help you look like Goku from Dragon Ball-Z. I don't even know how the Goku one would work. He doesn't look like a real person. How could someone tell if that was working? Someone please tell me.

But the one I saw the most was Ariana Grande. Holy

shit, so many people want to be Ariana Grande on this weird side of YouTube. "Look like Ariana!" "Sound like Ariana!" "Sound, look, AND act like Ariana!" Imagine if this worked. Imagine just walking down the street and every other person was just Ariana Grande. That would be insanity. Thankfully, it doesn't work, so that's not a world I have to live in. I just found it odd that this section of YouTube so desperately craves to just be Ariana Grande that they'll listen to these videos as they sleep just to get her nose or something. The comments of these videos are littered with people saying that their family and friends—sometimes even strangers on the street—are telling them that they look like Ariana.

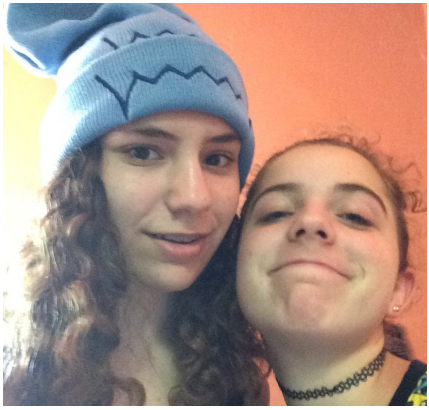
Is there something I'm missing? Like I said, I can understand positive affirmations for confidence or whatever. But listening to a video to make you look like goddamn Goku?? It makes me a little sad to know that some people lack so much self confidence that they'll watch videos like this, but I'm also fascinated. But most of all: I'm confused.

The appeal for these videos is definitely in its target audience's self-esteem issues, which is incredibly messed up. My sister admitted to me that she used to watch these to change her eye color (obviously, this did not work), so it makes me think more about the large amount of preteens that are having their image issues fueled by videos like these that make it seem that only a handful of features are desirable. I don't think these videos are the most harmful things on the internet, but they aren't entirely harmless. Like I said, making videos that make people think they can take on these beauty "norms" just makes a younger, more impressionable audience feel that that is the only way to look and feel beautiful.

That being said, I am now tempted to look like Goku. God, I wish I was Goku.

A Childhood Dream

Issue #49 Fever Dream
By: Julie



I've lost count of all the things I wanted to be when I grew up. At one point, I wanted to be the person who finally solved the secret of the Bermuda Triangle. At another, I wanted to absolutely understand sleep paralysis. These were both bold claims for someone who never got higher than a C in any high school science class.

When I was younger than five and heavily influenced by shows like Hannah Montana, I wanted to be a popstar.

According to my mother, there was a period of time where I wanted to be a veterinarian (this must have been before I discovered that watching needles get injected makes me dizzy and I hate seeing animals in pain).

Between the ages of six and ten, I would have done anything to become a pilot. For two summers in a row, I went to an aerospace camp at a small, local airport and even got to fly a plane while I was there (side note: why on earth would the pilot let an 8-year-old fly a plane?).

That one stuck for a while.

Another long span of my childhood was composed of the neighborhood kids and I "fencing" with tree branches. There was an easement between my house and the next-door-neighbors house that was lined with trees that we would use to "practice." We each had our own, claimed tree, and it was a

sin to use anybody else's. The amount of begging I did trying to get my mom to let me actually take fencing lessons so that "Julie's Fencing Academy" wouldn't just be a fantasy was outrageous.

Then, when I was in middle school, I swore to my parents that I was going to be editing movies when I grew up. The desire stemmed from the love of the videos my friend and I would make. They were mostly music videos. The one I remember the most fondly was to "Call me, Maybe." The one I remember most vividly was to "How You Remind Me" by Nickleback (one day, Loco, I will tell you the story of the time I went to a Nickleback concert. Today is not that day).

My point is: That was my dream when I was surrounded by a need to create and the child-like ability to not be terrified of failure. Those were the days when I would attempt a flip on the trampoline without the worry I'd fall on my neck and break it; they were the days when I would fall off my bike and just stand up and get back on it, even if I'd gotten hurt. My childhood best friend and I made videos for fun and we never stopped to think about whether or not they were good.

For Christmas, I got a video editing software and was no longer at the mercy of iMovie and Windows Movie Maker. I took social studies projects seriously when making a video was involved. I took an animation class as soon as I was given the opportunity. I had the feeling that all kids do when they find something they love: I could do this forever.

But then I got older and I would grab the camera and wonder what other people would think of what I made. I would write things and hide them in drawers, or deep in the notes on my phone. No one I knew in person was allowed to read the things I wrote. The fear of rejection and failure led to a standstill in creation– If I was making things, I wasn't getting any feedback. I was improving because I was writing, but I

was improving without basis, without input. You reach a threshold when you become as good as you can without putting in the work to be better, and I'd definitely reached it.

For a few years, I paused most creative outlets. I stopped drawing in 2015 and didn't pick it up again for three years. Every November, I would pretend to actually try to finish NaNoWriMo, but I avoided the effort so I couldn't be disappointed when I failed.

I'd resigned myself to majoring in political science with the hopes of becoming a history teacher. I liked history well enough, and I enjoyed a good debate, and I'd decided that I could settle and be happy.

It wasn't until I watched Mad Men that I realized there were creative jobs outside of the spectacular. It wasn't likely I'd become a television writer (my dream career, even now), but if there was a job I could do that used some creative muscles, it would be better than teaching history to a bunch of high schoolers that don't actually want to be in my class. I did research and switched my hopeful major to communications, which eliminated one of my top-choice colleges because they didn't even offer a communications major.

I'd picked a major. I was out of my STEM and sports-oriented high school, and I thought college would be some kind of catalyst. I was taking classes for my major rather than just requirements. Gone were the days of my creative time slots being squandered by things like algebra and biology– now I could make things, right?

Except, my first semester of college was full of more requirements. A basic communications course, a literary analysis class, a basic writing class where we talked about the things I'd spent the last four years learning. I liked literary analysis, I liked learning about the history of media, but I was longing for the opportunity to create things.

I joked around with friends and we verbally outlined a sitcom about our friend group. Something dumb. Friends but we're unknowingly haunted by a ghost. I told myself that would hold me, that the ghost wasn't just a metaphor for the resurgence of my childhood desires.

It was a hard pill to swallow, but I eventually realized that I'm older now, which means I'm more breakable, and failure is constantly on the forefront of my mind. I was writing for classes, which meant I wrote for a grade rather than enjoyment. I took business classes for my major, which meant that I was learning about things I love in the most mundane of ways. The days of making things with my friends for fun became a fever dream because they weren't profitable, or timely, and they would take energy I could dedicate to more productive things like studying or sleeping.

Zoe and I in 2013, wearing matching pajamas

And then I decided: *fuck it, I'm going to take some video* classes.

I'm not really sure when it happened: maybe it was the first time I was reunited with video editing software since middle school. Maybe it was when I grabbed a camera and started filming, once again, in earnest. But at some point, I realized I was exactly where I said I was going to end up.

Last semester, I took a video class where the only requirement was to make something. This semester, I'm in a video class where the requirement is to make something better every time.

Whenever I think back to those days: forcing my friends to learn a dance to "Starships" by Nicki Minaj,

or have a picnic so I can film them to the tune of “Don’t Stop Believin’” I feel a lot like Heidi Blickenstaff in Title of Show. You know, because I found A Way Back to Then.

Which, frankly, is a miracle because those days are so far away. That friend used to live right down the road from me, now we got to school an hour and a half away from each other. We used to beg our parents for sleepovers and then pretend to vlog when we were supposed to be asleep. We used to throw idea-spaghetti at the wall and didn’t bother to check if it would stick because we were already making whatever it was we’d come up with.

Recently I texted her to thank her. I don’t think I would be the person I am now if she hadn’t been so willing to act like a doof in front of a camera.

The truth is, I don’t think I’m an entirely different person than I was back then. Given the opportunity, I’d still like to get my pilot’s license. I still love animals and want to help them when I can. I still, often, drop everything to sing along to my favorite songs.

When I was twelve years old, I don’t even think that I believed me when I boasted that I was going to be editing things for the rest of my life. Maybe I still don’t believe me. But standing where I am now, eight years down the line and still loving the thing that I swore I was going to do? That’s the best feeling I could have hoped for.

Oh, and Zoe? Thanks. I love you so much.

Graduating From Zoom University

Issue # 50

By: Allie, Kate, Allora, and Eric

Kate, Allora, Allie, and Eric, four seniors and long time loco staffers, talk about their transition to online university, losing the end of their senior year, and graduating during a global pandemic.

Note from the Editor: This is a video. To view, download the Artivive app and scan the picture above!

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